

According to the Greek historian Herodotus the Pelasgians of his day spoke a foreign tongue, and lived in remote villages, observing primitive religious practices.

But was it always so? And who were these elusive Pelasgians? They were the dark, dolichocephalic race, who formed the primitive population of the Mediterranean basin and spoke African languages. Driven out of their lands, exterminated or enslaved, they lost their name and identity as a people.

Indo-European Afro-Asiatic traders displaced them. Then came the warlike Indo-Europeans. Now only the Basques survive.

# THE AFRICAN ORIGINS of CLASSICAL CIVILISATION



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GJK Campbell-Dunn



# THE AFRICAN ORIGINS OF CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

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ΣΧΕΔΟΝ ΚΑΙ Η ΣΥΜΠΑΣΑ ΕΛΛΑΣ ΚΑΤΟΙΚΙΑ  
ΒΑΡΒΑΡΩΝ ΥΠΗΡΞΕ ΤΟ ΠΑΛΑΙΟΝ.





Behind the glory of Greece and the grandeur of Rome lies a dark shadow, the shadow of black Africa.

The first inhabitants of Crete and Greece were Africans, but the Greeks pretended that they did not exist. They expunged them from their history, and relegated them to the dimly understood world of mythology, the shadowy realms of "King Minos".

The Etruscans, who were in Rome before the Romans, spoke an African language, and came ultimately from Africa. But they too were subjugated and destroyed.

In Spain the Basques are fighting for survival : the survival of their language, their customs, their identity.

They fear that they will meet the same fate as the Etruscans of old. "One lives Basque, one dies Basque". That is what they say. "Basque is a fatherland".

With Herodotus as our guide we will enter the world behind the mirror and explore a prehistoric wonderland of "works remarkable and great".

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## PREFACE

This book presents evidence that the Greek and Roman Classics came out of Africa. I did not originally believe this, but was forced to the conclusion by my work on Cretan Linear A. As the research progressed I came to realise that the gulf behind the Classics seen by Toynbee could only be filled by a hypothesis of African migrations into the Mediterranean.

Unfortunately the great achievement of the Linear B decipherment by Ventris and Chadwick has diverted attention away from the more fundamental question of Minoan origins, and focussed attention narrowly on the Indo-European component of the Classics.

Martin Bernal saw the problem, and also part of the solution. I have worked independently of Bernal, and use a different method. Everywhere I have found myself treading in the footsteps of Sir Arthur Evans. He was the pioneer who lead the way.

We now need to go back to the beginning and examine the situation before the arrival of the Indo-Europeans. Particularly important for this is the study of placenames, the most enduring form of evidence we have at our disposal. Many of these are African. But there are other pieces of evidence which point in the same direction, as we shall see.

Graham Campbell-Dunn  
Christchurch, New Zealand.



# I

## WHO WERE THE PELASGIANS ?

---



**“Pelasgian : thus the Greeks designated the erratic block of their origins”.**

**CALASSO**

**“Allmählich wird Pelasger zum Sammelnamen für die vorgriech. Bevölkerung in vielen Gegenden von Hellas, sowie der Troas und der Inseln, ferner für die vor-röm. in Italien, ja sogar Benennung der Griechen selbst.”**

**NEUMANN**



Following How & Wells (1912), Appendix XIV, we will consider three theories about the identity of the Pelasgians.

They were the people of Pelasgiotis in Thessaly. I (Meyer put them in Thessaly and Crete).

They were the prehistoric peoples of Greece and the Aegean. II Names beginning with *a-* (Attika, Arcadia, Argolis, Andros, Amorgos, Adana, Alabanda etc) appear to have an old African prefix, common in Niger-Congo.

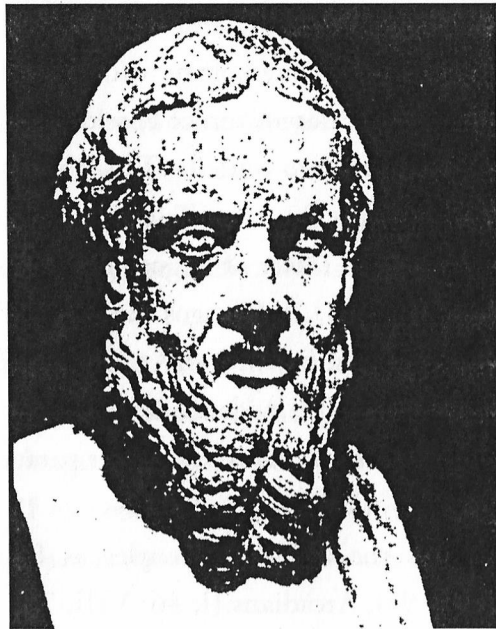
They were the prehistoric inhabitants of the Aegean and Mediterranean, and were associated with the agglutinating substrate languages which have survived as language isolates. III Evidence from *a-* prefixes exists in all these areas. A glance at the Atlas demonstrates this.

The Pelasgians (Neumann 1979 : 594 –5 DKP, Band 4) are associated first of all with Pelasgiotis in Thessaly. The Zeus of Dodona (Iliad XVI, 233) is called Pelasgikos. The name Dodona has a distinctly non-European appearance. And Larissa, to the north of Pelasgiotis, is known to be a Pelasgian name. In fact there are three places called Larissa in Thessaly, two in the Peloponnese, and four on the coast of Asia Minor. Homer Iliad (II, 840; X, 429)

also refers to Pelasgians in Northern Asia Minor. So if we begin with Pelasgiotis, we are led beyond into the Peloponnese and Asia Minor. Which takes us into Theory Two.

The personal name Pelasgos (von Geisau 1979 : 595 DKP, Band 4), is associated, in mythology, with Thessaly, Argos and Arcadia. Thus Pelasgos son of Poseidon and Larisa, leaves the Peloponnese to settle in Thessaly. (Dionysius Hal. I, 17, 3). Pelasgos the son of Triopas, great grandson of Argos, names the Tower of Argos after his daughter Larisa (Pausanias I, 14, 2). Pelasgos the father of Lycaon was autochthonous, the first man in Arcadia. (Apollodoros III, 96 [Hesychius] ). This evidence, if we may call it such, is consistent with Theory II, and with our paragraph 1.

Herodotus lists the following peoples as Pelasgian : Aeolians (VII, 95), Arcadians (I, 46; VIII, 73), Argives (II, 171), Athenians (I, 56-57; VIII, 44), Dodonaeans (II, 56). It will be seen that he has added the Athenians to the list. He tells us that all the Pelasgians originally spoke a “barbarous”, ie non-Greek language. (Compare Thucydides IV, 109 for Pelasgians at Akte, Lemnos and Athens).



“Grote maintained that the historian Herodotus knew nothing about the Pelasgians except that they spoke “barbarian” and lived in remote villages”.

Herodotus (I, 57) : “What the language of the Pelasgi was I cannot say with any certainty . If however we may form a conjecture from the tongue spoken by the Pelasgi of the present day, - those, for instance who lived at Creston above the Tyrrhenians, who formerly dwelt in the district named Thessaliotis, and were neighbours of the people now called the Dorians, - or those again who founded Plakia and Scylace upon the Hellespont, who had previously dwelt for some time with the Athenians, - or those, in short, of any other of the cities which have dropped the name but are in fact Pelasgian ; if I say we are to form a conjecture from any of these, we must pronounce that the Pelasgi spoke a barbarous language. If this were really so, and the entire Pelasgic race spoke the same tongue, the Athenians, who were certainly Pelasgi, must have changed their language at the same time that they passed into the Hellenic body; for it is a certain fact that the people of Creston speak a language unlike any of their neighbours, and the same is true of the Placianians, while the language spoken by these two people is the same; which shows that both retain the idiom which they brought with them into the counties where they are now settled.

The Hellenic race has never, since its first origin, changed its speech. This at least seems evident to me. It was a



branch of the Pelasgic, which separated from the main body, and at first was scanty in numbers and of little power; but it gradually spread and increased to a multitude of nations...The Pelasgi, on the other hand, were, as I think, a barbarian race which never greatly multiplied." (Rawlinson's translation).

Herodotus takes the view that the Hellenic race "was a branch of the Pelasgic" and that the Athenians were originally Pelasgians and must have spoken Pelasgian. But he baulks at the logical inference that all the Greeks originally spoke Pelasgian. "The Hellenic race has never since its first origin changed its speech" he says.

His problem arises from the fact that the Indo-European colonisation of Greece took place well before his time. Before that colonisation, the inhabitants of Greece were Pelasgians, and spoke "Pelasgian". In his day the Pelasgian speakers had been largely absorbed by the Indo-European element, and their speech had been largely replaced by Indo-European speech. He considers that the Pelasgians were a "barbarian race which never greatly multiplied". In fact they were the indigenous inhabitants of Greece, who in his day survived, with their indigenous speech intact, only in isolated areas. At the present day these places, too, speak Greek, ie an Indo-European language. The

Pelasgians no longer exist, either as a speech community or as a race.

But they originally occupied much of Greece. They are part of the genetic constitution of the Greek race, which is in fact part-Pelasgic and part-Indo-European.

Homer puts Pelasgians also in Crete (*Odyssey* XIX, 176-177), but contrasts them with the "native Cretans". Homer's problem is the same as that of Herodotus. Most scholars would now agree in placing Homer after the Bronze Age. In his day Indo-Europeans, his "native Cretans", had largely replaced or overlaid the original Bronze Age inhabitants of Crete. At Praisos in East Crete however a non-Indo-European language was still in use in the fourth century BC (Stanford 1948, II : 322). Inscriptional evidence of this survives.

Homer's reference to King Minos at Knossos shows that his picture of Crete is already under the influence of mythology. We now know that King Minos did not exist. Minos is based on the placename Minoia. He is a creation of the mythographers. Some regard the passage as an interpolation, but it is consistent with a Homer who is post-Bronze Age, and giving us echoes of a glorious past. One cannot expect history from an epic poet.

We turn now to Theory III, the theory that there was a “Pelasgian” presence throughout the Mediterranean. This is based, among other things, on the existence of language isolates, namely Basque and Etruscan, in the Mediterranean. The evidence of placenames with “basi bisillabiche” (Vidos 1959 : 236) is more tenuous: Eg \*ganda “stony slope” , (< N-C *gan, gag, gana, gaga* “long, high” etc), which gives placenames in the Rhaetic Alps, in Basque, and in the Cantabrian mountains; \*mala “mountain” (< Niger-Congo *ma* “back”), \*ruga “canal”, with reflexes in Spanish, Portuguese, Basque, Sardinian. All these putative roots have the vowel *a* in both syllables, an alternation of *r* and *l* and fluctuation between voiced and voiceless consonants (\*canta / \*ganda etc), and gemination of *r* and *l* (\*carra, \*garra ).

Basque has not reliably been connected with any other language. In ancient times the Iberian language was spoken in Spain, of which traces are attested. Entwhistle (1962 : 31) considers that Iberian may have been a language of North African origin, and that it probably “resembled Basque closely ... in its vocabulary and structure”. But there is a gap of a millennium between its documents and the earliest Basque texts, which makes a positive identification impossible. Others identify Basque with

Aquitania (Dalby 1998 : 76-77). Basque was once used over a wide area of the central and eastern peninsula, and contributed placenames to the east and south. Basque is agglutinative in structure.

Bullfighting, however, is evidence for African influence in Spain. It may go back well before the Moorish occupation. [The red costume associated with the Mabalá mask reflects the red cloak used in bullfighting (Beckwith & Fisher 1999 : II, 328-9). Bulls are colourblind]. And the Parade of the Giants at Toledo makes use of masks, which we regard as an African invention.

The lineage of the Etruscan language has also not been established. The language is partly known, and agglutinative in structure. It has however been connected with the sixth century inscription from Lemnos, which is in Etruscan or a dialect of Etruscan. The Etruscans may have originally been matrilineal. In classical times they were known for their soft living, cruelty –they invented gladiatorial games- and the freedom enjoyed by their women, who dined in male company and drank wine. See now Campbell-Dunn (2004) for a Niger-Congo (Mande) connection.



Hellanicus (fr. 1, FHG i, 45) is the probable source for the view that the Pelasgians were identifiable with the Tyrrhenians, and so the Etruscans.

We consider that the Roman ancestor cult was of African origin. The *Manes* recall the African *mani*. Likewise the two-headed Janus has numerous parallels in Africa, but few elsewhere. The Roman Vulcan has been identified with the Cretan Velchanus.

In fact much of Roman religion looks African. Its gods are vaguely defined *numina*, frequently associated with the countryside. The Roman Priapus, the garden god, in particular, looks like an African fertility figure, bringing increase to the flocks and crops. He may share a common origin with the Greek herms, which are also ithyphallic. The Carnival of Venice, again, makes use of masks. And the coursing of bulls which occurs yearly in certain north Italian towns, recalls the bullsports of prehistoric Crete, and the bullfighting in Spain.

The Roman atrium house, I consider, is derived from Yoruba building practice (Willett 1993 : 128). The atrium house went from Africa to Rome, not in the reverse direction. The Sardinian *nuraghi*, we shall see, were also of African origin.

The Pelasgians are everywhere associated with primitive religious practices. This is a constant feature referred to by Herodotus.

Herodotus (II, 55) : "In early times the Pelasgi, as I know by information which I got at Dodona, offered sacrifices of all kinds, and prayed to the gods, but had no distinct names or appellations for them, since they had never heard of any." These gods sound like the gods of early Rome, vague and impersonal. Only later did the Romans identify their gods with the clearly defined personalities of Greek mythology. Elsewhere Herodotus (II, 50, 51 etc) ascribes Greek religious knowledge and practices to the Pelasgi.

Professor Ridgeway has argued that legends place Pelasgians in all places where archaeology has found "Mycenaean" remains. The same places, we find, are notable for echoes of cannibalism, human sacrifice, and Dionysiac rites involving *sparagmos* (dismemberment), the eating of raw flesh (*omophagia*) and other primitive practices. Hecataeus states that in ancient times practically the whole of Greece was occupied by barbarians.

For Ridgeway **the Pelasgoi were the dark, dolichocephalic race, who formed the primitive population of the Mediterranean basin.** We are in general agreement with this view.

It accords well with substrate theory, which states that, before the arrival of the Europeans, the Mediterranean basin was colonised by an African element. The original African languages survived only in isolated pockets, represented by Etruscan and Basque. And by the language of Minoan Crete, which has now been shown to be African (Campbell-Dunn 2006).

So all of our three original theories have turned out to be true in a sense. The Pelasgians were present not only in Pelasgiotis, not only in early Greece, but throughout the Aegean and Mediterranean. These far-flung Pelasgians were not homogeneous, however.

Thus we should not suppose that they all spoke the same single language. The early Africans were already divided into numerous separate tribes. A number of these are mentioned on the Linear A Tablets from Crete (Sara, Kapa). These were certainly in Greece during the Bronze Age. But there must have been many others, some which we will never obtain knowledge of. In Italy we have Sardinia

(> \*Sara-di-ni-a : *di* “tribe”, *ni* “people”, *a* “article”) and Capri (> Ka-pa-ri : *ri* “plural”); In Asia Minor Sardis (> Sara-di-s : *di* “tribe”, *s* nominative ending from *ki*). Salamis, Saro-nic Gulf incorporate Sara ; Capaneus (Greek personal name) includes Kapa.

We suspect the Pelasgians of early Spain came from North Africa. Where the Etruscans came from, we do not know for sure. But judging from the use of *atria*, Yorubans made their influence felt at Rome. Yorubans appear to have been the dominant influence in Crete, at least during the Middle Minoan period. Earlier, there were other influences.

What colour were the Pelasgians? With Professor Ridgeway we think they were black. Even in Greece itself they were black. James (1961 : 121) mentions an old-established prehistoric culture on the Greek mainland “ruled over by a dark-skinned, black-haired feudal aristocracy the contents of whose graves reveal Cretan connections”. He does not believe they were Cretans however, because they were bearded, not clean-shaven, and did not wear Cretan dress.

All the Mediterranean peoples now have olive skin. But originally they were all black. A black population of

indigenous stock intermarrying with white Indo-Europeans has produced the coffee coloured Mediterranean race which we know today. Proof, if it be needed, can be seen in the distribution of sickle cell anemia, and the related phenomenon of thalassemia. Both these conditions were prevalent in ancient Greece and Italy (Haynes 2000 : 9), and both are of African origin. Sickle cell anemia is known to give immunity to malaria, which is rampant on the African continent.

Physical anthropologists now emphasise the broad homogeneity of Mediterranean prehistoric populations (Barker & Rasmussen 1998 : 82). In other words there was a single base population throughout the Mediterranean in the prehistoric period. This population, we maintain, was Pelasgian, that is to say, African. The documentary evidence was amply presented in Schachermeyr's book, Etruskische Frühgeschichte, published in German in 1929.

This book takes us on a quest for the the Pelasgians. We look for them first in Greece and the Aegean. Then we extend our search more widely, to Rome and Sardinia. And finally to Spain. In this way an ever widening picture of African influence begins to emerge, with Crete as the centre. Crete was, we believe, the dominant civilisation,

outside Egypt and Africa, in the Bronze Age. King Minos, it appears, was a myth, but the sea kingdom of Crete was real, as we know from the frescoes.

NOTE : This book does not discuss the chronological disputes regarding Egypt and Crete, including the date of the eruption of Thera. Dickinson (1994), Chapter 7, summarises archaeological research on trade and foreign contacts during the Aegean Bronze Age. We regard the Basque penetration of the West as going back to the Neolithic Period. Evidence for this position is given in our last chapter.



The enigma of Early Cycladic Sculpture is inescapable. How did an abstract concept of the female nude come to appear as if from nowhere in the Cycladic Islands during the early Bronze Age? The standard answer, that these figures simply evolved from the steatopygous fertility figures of the Neolithic Period is clearly inadequate.

What was the real purpose of these deceptively modern stone statuettes? We will consider several possibilities.

The Idol Theory. I Literally an idol (Greek *eidolon*) is just an image, a likeness. But the word has acquired connotations of religious awe and reverence in a context of pagan worship.

In its most uncompromising form the theory is seldom taken seriously nowadays. The statuettes, when their find context is known, tend to be associated with burials, which suggests a funerary, not a cult function.

Images of Ancestors. II This theory is not as far-fetched as it may at first seem. Ancestral figures are shadowy. Their features are vague and imprecisely known. This accords with the summary treatment of the faces. The head is set on a long neck. It is oval, with a prominent long nose; otherwise typically featureless except for ears indicated

## II

### LONG NECKS AND LONG NOSES



**“The marble dolls of the Cyclades in which already the unruly human body has undergone a geometrical discipline”.**

**CLARK**

**“Works of art of such dazzling simplicity that they attract the modern eye, which responds directly to them with real pleasure”.**

**DOUMAS**

too high on the head. Sometimes a mouth is suggested by a horizontal groove. The eyes, to judge by traces of paint, were brushed on later. Red, universally favoured in burials, is a preferred colour.

Many of the figures, especially the earlier ones, have a totem pole quality; long and narrow, with emphasis on the vertical. The arms may be vestigial or barely indicated at all. Sometimes a smaller figure is imposed on the main figure's head. The feet point straight downward, without a supporting base on which to stand, like a carved tree trunk rising from the ground.

If they are ancestors however, the figures are matriarchs; for most are definitely identifiable as female. In a matriarchal social structure this is not impossible. If it were so, it would point to an origin further east. Note that the unusual figurine in Hood (1978 : 92, Fig. 71 D) is male and wears the codpiece, an African garment.

Playthings, or Companions of the Dead (servants or ushabtis). III There is nothing, however, about these clinically austere figures that would amuse a child; and no suggestion that they might be fitted to perform any specific task.



**“These nude abstract statuettes with big heads are African in form, and can be explained in terms of African beliefs”.**

Mother Goddesses or Fertility Goddesses. IV Certainly the breasts and pubis are usually indicated. Kenneth Clark (1960: 64-65) calls the type the "Crystalline Venus", however, and patent sexual and fertility characteristics (eg. swelling breasts and buttocks, hands clasping the nipples) are conspicuously absent. In favour of a fertility interpretation is the interment of the statuettes with small replicas of the bull - an animal whose male fertility value is all too well known. Often the hands are crossed over the breasts, probably a reference to pregnancy or child-bearing.

Doubles of the Deceased, intended to receive the soul after death. V Compare the Egyptian funerary statues, reserve heads etc. A notable feature is that many of the statuettes were found with the legs broken at the knees, which has been taken to be a precaution against the "spirit walking" (Dumas 1983: 35-36). In this connection we are reminded of the work of Marcel Griaule among the Dogon of the African Sudan. Here each member of the tribe had a personal statuette which was kept hidden until the time of death, when it was buried with its owner. The funeral ritual involved breaking the deceased's hoe and other objects of a personal nature. For a Greek "double" see the illustration of Dionysus with his Alter Ego in Kerenyi (1958: pl. 160).

Among the Dogon there is a general fear of the spirits of the dead, who are regarded as malign, and a threat to the living. The ghosts are believed to enter the bodies of animals: snakes, cats, etc, but also plants. The characteristic *gri gris* or charms are used to repel such ghosts.

Once every twelve years, at the African Dama festival, the spirits are welcomed among the living and food is put out for them, as at the Greek Anthesteria. In Greece at the day's end the ghosts are banished whence they have come with the injunction: "Begone Kares (Souls). It is no longer Anthesteria". The Carians of Asia Minor had a Niger-Congo crested "Mohican" hairstyle like that of the Fulani (Hutchinson 1962), and may have been African. Kare, Kari, Kali are Niger-Congo tribes (Welmers 1971).

Once again, we have a phenomenon which is at home in an African context. In fact the sculptured figures of the Congo region are typically abstract and summary in their treatment of facial features. The large heads may be explained in terms of the African "child-ancestor" concept. Another parallel is the special significance attributed to twins in the Bantu and other African regions. Twins were highly prized by the Yoruba. And in fact the Cycladic statuettes frequently come in pairs, a peculiarity which



within the framework of historical Greek funerary beliefs and practices, defies explanation.

The author favours theory V. The fertility bulls need not be a problem. Fertility is often associated with death, particularly where the soul is believed to pass on into a new body.

The Cycladic peoples arrived via Caria. With the long heads we may compare the dolichocephalic skulls of the Negro race. In Africa a long head was admired. Hence the practice of lengthening the skull artificially as seen in the photograph published by Henschen (1966: pl.36).

In Africa also, a long neck is associated with longevity. For antiquity we may cite Herodotus' application of the epithet "long-lived" to the Ethiopians, ie. the people of Africa, backed up by the usual story-teller's anecdote (Herodotus III, 20). We quote him in Carter's translation: "Now these Ethiopians... are reputed to be the tallest and handsomest of all mankind... whichever man of the tribe they judge to be the tallest and to be strong in proportion to his stature, him they deem worthy to be king".

Recent work by Blier (1995) on the subject of the African Vodun from Dahomey and neighbouring regions can be

enlisted to cast additional light on the Cycladic Idols. In studying the African origins of the voodoo cult Blier presents a carefully researched analysis and interpretation of the small West Africa figures known as *bocio*. The *bocio* is a statuette, literally an "empowered cadaver (or body)" in the Fon language (Blier 1995 : 100). In the Fon mortuary ceremony a piece of wood was carved and dressed to resemble the deceased, then placed in the tomb to ensure that the dead person does not take a human life. It is a type of imitation or substitute for a living person, a decoy designed to protect the living. Like the Cycladic Idols, therefore, the *bocio* was interred along with the bodies of the dead.

As a substitute it required "all that humans possess - feet, hands, eyes". All the essentials, rendered in an inanimate substance such as wood, metal or stone were there. But it differed from a real person in lacking irrelevant details. It was not intended as an exact copy. It was an abstract reduction of a human, with proportions that differed from those of nature. Hence the enlarged head and hands for example. A spirit was believed to inhabit the head. Both head and hands were of special importance as embodiments of the *se*, loosely rendered "self", but loaded with many parameters of significance deeply embedded in African belief and magic. Ultimately the *se* is derived

from the concept of the cleared field, considered to be the dwelling of a god. *Se* also means the personal destiny, which is written in the lines of the hands.

The hands of the *bocio* are generally held against the sides, or over the stomach, as in the Cycladic Idols. This is in order to keep the destiny, the self, private and concealed from view. Only in kings, chiefs and persons of social importance are the hands shown open, for their destiny is a public one.

The large heads and long necks of the Cycladic figures are clarified by Blier's research into the *bocio*. The head is "identified with "success, power, individuation" " (Blier 1995 : 155). It is, as Pazzi (1976 : 148), cited by Blier, states, "the seat of commandment, ...the symbol of authority in the society". It is identified with "ideas of thought, control, and expression" (Blier 1995 : 155). Good fortune, success, wealth are associated with the head. It is also "the seat of power and *vodu*."

Key features of the head are the fontanel, associated with "life and vital force" (Blier 1995 : 158) ; the forehead, associated with "one's destiny and fortune" ; the face, "for the Fon the mirror of the soul" . The eyes were identified with one's "protective spiritual counterpart (*ye*)", "visible

as a reflection on one's pupil". The ear "is identified with boundaries and the interface between person and public".

The nose is linked with breathing, health, wellbeing, but when an enemy comes at night "the nose smells the odour". Like the eye the nose has a protective function. The mouth also indicates wellbeing, food consumption, but more importantly speech whether for good or for ill. The mouth is also associated with the powers of *bo*. The closed mouth refers to death and cadavers, the open mouth to response. The associated word *gbe* means "speech", but also "life".

The neck (Blier 1995 : 154) is associated with "ideas of work, physical labour, fatigue and support". Heavy weights were carried on the head and supported by the neck: "the necks of the *bocio* are carved in the form of cylinders...sometimes exaggerated in length or width". The neck signifies the "physical difficulties of life".

Apart from the known association of the Cycladic Idols with death and with ancestors, a connection with pregnancy has often been suggested. In fact the *bocio* is particularly linked with times of crisis, times of transition. Pregnancy, like death, like illness, is just such a time.

At such times a substitute is needed, a decoy to attract harmful forces away from the individual.

In times of transition it was customary to shave the head, and indeed our Cycladic Idols are without hair. They are also nude, which is again significant in an African context. Nudity is a sign of purity, ritual purity, but also of weakness. At times of crisis one must be pure, and acknowledge one's weakness in the hands of fate. Fatalism is not indicated here however.

Finally the size of the statuettes is significant. They fall in a range between 20 centimetres and 1 metre. The *bocio* statuettes also come within this range, most being about 30 centimetres high. In Africa the size of the statuette determines its importance, the size of the domain which it dominates with its magical powers. We may have here the remote origins of the Egyptian concept known as significance perspective.

For a fuller account of the *bocio* the reader is referred to Blier and to the sources which she cites. The range of the subject is vast, and we have mentioned only the features most relevant to our argument. A comprehensive treatment cannot be given here.

We have said enough, I think, to establish our case. The Cycladic Idols are evidence for an African presence in the Cyclades during the Early Bronze Age. If we treat the Cycladic Idols as African *bocio* translated into stone, our enigma is largely solved.

### III

## CYCLADIC FRYING PANS



**“Much has been said about the peculiar shape and the probable use of the frying-pans found mostly in Syros. ... An altogether convincing interpretation however has not yet been reached”.**

**SAPOUNA-SAKELLARAKIS**

**“Motifs which unequivocally represent real things are found only on Cycladic examples. There are only three such motifs : female genitalia, fish and ships.”**

**COLEMAN**

The Objects known as Cycladic frying pans (Coleman 1985, Doumas 1983, Sapouna-Sakellerakis n. d.) have been found in Greece and the Greek islands and Crete. They are shallow flat stone or terracotta trays of rounded shape, with a low rim and short handle. Most are between 20 and 28 centimetres in diameter. The Greek ones are dated EH I & II, the Cycladic ones EC II. In other words they belong to the early Bronze Age and are contemporary with the Cycladic Idols. See Coleman (1985 : 192) for a map of findspots, *ibid.* page 194 for handle shapes.

Decoration includes ships, spirals and the female genital. They are found commonly, but not always in tombs, often in association with the Cycladic Idols. At Syros in the better preserved graves they are often found near the heads of the dead. A ritual purpose is therefore thought probable. What was the function of these mysterious objects?

Suggestions as to their use include the following:

Frying Pans. I The traditional name is a misnomer. They show no signs of burning and are often decorated on the bottom. Real frying pans are more irregular in shape. “Cooking pots...are absent from the graves” (Doumas 1983 : 31).



Plates (Mylonas). II The theory is that they may have contained real or symbolic food offered to the dead. The walls would then be to prevent the food escaping. Evidence for this is lacking and I regard it as unlikely. The unusual handles are a problem. Vermeule (1972 : 56) reporting on Cycladic Graves, states : "the survivors seem to have offered no food and burned no ceremonial fires at the simple funeral". See however Parrinder's (1967 p.94) illustration of an Ibo wooden dish (with pierced, crescent-shaped handle) used to make offerings of food to the gods in Nigeria. This dish differs from the "frying pans" in its central boss, and in not having a ledge outside the rim of the bowl.

Mirrors. III This use would require the object to be filled with water or oil. The raised sides might suggest such a procedure. But the purpose of most does not seem to be cosmetic. Mirrors (often in pairs) are found in Etruscan female tombs however. The mirror was believed to capture the soul. So it might be defaced.

Funerary Drums. IV This function would involve stretching hide over the frying pan. Most unlikely. A drum would be deeper, and made of more resonant materials.

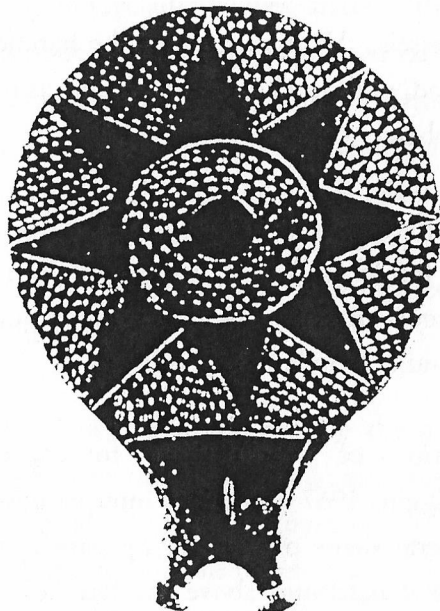
Navigation Instruments. V Also highly unlikely in a funerary context, especially in view of the decoration (and contemporary knowledge of navigation). To employ a Cycladic "frying pan" to take sightings on board a ship at sea would be impractical.

Libation Vessels. VI The shape of the handles and the general broad, shallow shape of these objects makes such a use improbable.

The frying pans have also been seen, by association, as substitutes for Idols. VII. But they show no human features. They do have female genital decoration however. And the handles may be vestigial heads.

Representations of Wombs, VIII, for use as fertility charms (Higgins 1967 : 54). This interpretation is based on the general shape of the "frying pans", and on the female genital markings above the handles, which are interpreted as legs. It fits a treatment of the spirals as symbolising fertility. Another possibility is that they were used to collect the afterbirth.

Palettes. IX A number of palettes of rectangular or bowl shape have been found, which show residues of pigment. Generally they are shallower than the frying pans, and lack a pronounced rim. They do not have "frying pan" handles with associated female genitals.



**“Current theories are completely unable to explain the purpose of these puzzling objects. We need a fresh approach and fresh point of view”.**

Any serious explanation of the type must take account not only of the shape, but of the materials and of the kinds of decoration inscribed on the frying pans. A few metal exemplars of similar objects have come from outside the Cycladic area (eg Ugarit).

The shape of some handles has suggested an earlier design using wicker work or ropes. One is inclined to compare the Egyptian “tie” or “rope” hieroglyph (Gardiner V 6 & V 7). Binding originally had magical significance. It is possible that a rope was tied around the rim and crossed at the handles during use.

The raised rim indicates that the frying pans could be filled with water or some other liquid. In early societies water and water signs were associated with women (Griaule & Dieterlen 1951). The Egyptian hieroglyph for “well” was used to signify “woman”. Many of the frying pans are decorated with a picture of a female genital. Another frequent motive is the running spiral familiar to us in Minoan art, but also used widely as a fertility symbol (snake) in Africa. In Sieber & Herremann (2000 : 55, Cat. 62) an Igbo female mask shows such spirals worn in the hair. The spiral was also prominent at Kerma in the Sudan (Stevenson Smith 1958/1965 : plate 81 (B), dated Dynasty XII).

Boats with oars (rowlocks were invented in Egypt in the Old Kingdom) are also commonly represented on the “Frying Pans”, (less often with a square sail). In early times piracy was rife. Rowing with oars, as against the previous technique of paddling, gave greater speed. The rowing was arduous. It was performed in classical times by an underclass of slaves chained to the oar.

The boats on the frying pans refer to the male role, also perhaps to fate. Hutchinson (1962 : 91 – 92) thinks these boats were dugouts of cypress wood, with an attached high prow. One is reminded of Maori war canoes with their attached high prows, symbolising the sky. These prows however may have been used to establish an angle for stellar observation. They would also have made the vessels visible over the horizon. A Polynesian scholar has stated that the high prows on Oceanic canoes were protection against enemy arrows.

Prominent fish images surmount the raised prow (Coleman 1985 : 199). The probable explanation here is the use of sympathetic magic : a fish symbol attracts real fish.

Fingers (four or five lines, indicating a hand) or arms also may be shown on these representations, in conjunction

with the emblematic fish. The hand was connected with fate. But the reference may be to the size of the catch, the fingers being numbers.

A larger marble rimmed Dove Bowl, diam 39 cm, (Doumas 1983 : 134, 164) from the Syros Group, resembles the “frying pans”, but lacks the handle. It has a row of sixteen birds sculpted across the internal diameter. Other small stone images of birds were made in the Cyclades. Birds were used in early navigation (Hutchinson). But as in Egypt the Ba-bird represented the soul, so too birds signified souls in Africa. So an African explanation for the Cycladic frying pans should be considered. The stars on some “frying pans” may be intended as guides of navigators and of the dead.

We consider however that the frying pans so-called were really comparable to divination boards, X such as those illustrated in Willett (1993), *African Art*, ps. 83-84, plates 56 and 59. These Ifa divination trays were of similar size to the “frying pans” and also have a shallow raised rim. Some, like the “frying pans”, are slightly off-circular.

The boards were used to shake patterns of dust, nuts etc in order to predict the future. The diviner would read the patterns, and record them with marks. He then recited a special poem which went with the pattern observed.

One is reminded of the poems recited by the Delphic Oracle, and of Greek divinatory practices involving leaves, lots etc.

Like the “frying pans” the Ifa divinatory trays are decorated with abstract designs, zig zags (indicating water), chevrons, twists of rope, and also representational motifs, eg a head on our first example, which takes pride of place. The head was crucial in Africa. It harboured a spirit. Sapouna-Sakellarakis notes that in Cycladic burials “the skull was very carefully kept”.

In our opinion a key to understanding the Cycladic frying pans is to be found in the Minoan “bone fish” 35 x 17 mm in size, found at Knossos on Crete (Evans 1921 : III, 405 – 409). These small, fish shaped pieces of bone were inscribed with alphabetiform characters and low numerals: I, II, III, IIII, preceded by a cross or “total sign”. These always add up to less than ten (fingers of a hand). The cross may have indicated “ten” (total of two hands). The “bone fish” would have floated on water, and must have been used for divination. Evans thought they were used for a game of chance. We regard them as predictors of fate.

The practice of water divination is mentioned by Parrinder in his book on *African Mythology* (1976 : 89): “Divining bowls, filled with water and an assembly of objects, are used for discovering secrets or detecting witches in parts of tropical Africa. In southern Africa the Venda and Karanga of Rhodesia use such divining bowls, with patterns and pictures around the side of the bowl, and a cowrie shell in the middle which is called the umbilicus and represents the spirits of the mother. In the ruined buildings of Zimbabwe in Rhodesia similar soapstone bowls have been found, decorated with figures such as bulls”. Clay bulls might be included in Cycladic burials. A (bull ?) shaped “askos” was found at Melos (Sapouna-Sakellarakis page 9). In late Egypt deceased women were called “Hathors”, ie “cows” (Ions 1968 : 83). A horned head of Hathor featured on Egyptian mirrors.

Dice were originally employed to make predictions in Africa. The numbers on the dice, like the letters on the Ouija board, had magical significance. Tablets of ivory etc were similarly used. Compare the early Chinese Oracle Bones. The origins of writing are associated with magic. Again one thinks of the Minoan “bone fish”.



The notion of fate was a fundamental aspect of African belief, and was of course relevant to the tomb and to death. Fate began its course when the child first emerged from the female genital, shown on the “frying pans” at the handle. The spiral designs may represent the prophetic snake. Marks on the hands were “life lines”. Fate was also thought of as a thread.

And at the end of life the soul embarked on its final journey by boat (Ions 1968 : 131). Hence the representations of boats on the Cycladic “frying pans”. Dumas (1983 : 31) says “ship models in stone and lead have been found and dated to the Early Cycladic II period”. These can be explained as spirit boats, such as were found in Etruria and Sardinia. Toy boats may also have been floated in the “frying pans” to predict the future, as they still are at New Year in some countries.

For the significance of fish (and the Minoan “bone fish”) one can compare the fish depicted on early Christian tombs or catacombs. Fish ate those who died at sea. So they represented the soul. For the holding of a soul in a golden fish (Malaya) see Frazer (1987 : 676 – 7). Hence the connection with death. In Egyptian Hieroglyphic K 1 means “fish”, also “abomination”, Hieroglyph K 4 means “oxyrhynchus fish”, also “corpse”, K 5 “a fish”, also “stink”.

In the Cycladic islands there seems to have been a shortage of wood. So the islanders used stone, as they did for the idols, and terracotta. But the original African divining boards were wooden trays of roughly circular shape. Likewise the African “idols” were typically wooden.

The Cycladic Idols and “frying pans” alike have defied interpretation because they involve the translation of wooden objects into different materials : into stone worked with simple bronze implements such as the drill, chisel and saw (Sapouna-Sakellarakis page 52) together with abrasion (Idols) : or into terracotta, (less often stone), which nevertheless retains evidence of an earlier design in executed in wood (“frying pans”).

## IV

### MINOAN PALACE ARCHITECTURE



**“It appears that the Minoans did not object to disorderly planning as such ; they obviously saw no advantage in symmetry and may have been lovers of the picturesque at all costs ; in fact their architecture resembles their other arts in showing no sense of form.”**

**LAWRENCE**

**“A Minoan palace may best be understood as a theory or diagram of an ideal integration of the component parts of Minoan life and society”.**

**PREZIOSI & HITCHCOCK**

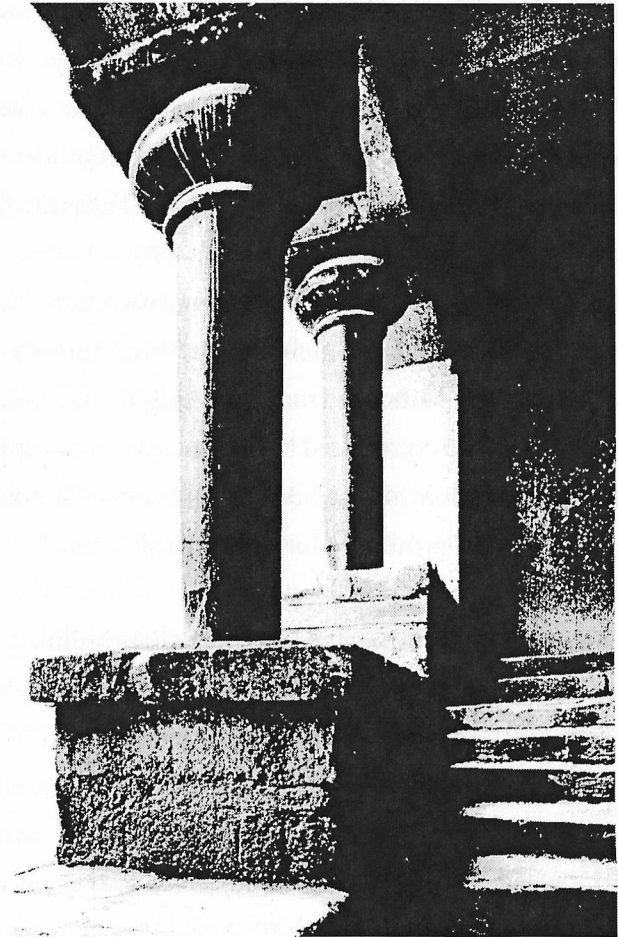
When Knossos was excavated critics recoiled in dismay at the incoherence and labyrinthine complexity of its plan. Symmetry and axiality, the leitmotifs of Greek architecture, were notably absent. The Minoans apparently had a preference for urban sprawl, whimsical development upward and outward, without the clarity of a quadrangular containing wall. Adjectives commonly applied were organic and agglutinative. Other Minoan cities or palaces followed similar loose, random principles. Only recently has Minoan architecture received a more favourable evaluation (Preziosi & Hitchcock 1999 : 65): “a diagram of an ideal integration of the component parts of Minoan life and society, itself harmoniously integrated into its environment”.

The early tendency was for scholars to explain the Cretan in terms of the first Asiatic palaces. Thus Schmalenbach (1948 : 11) : “Der Anlage der kretischen Paläste mit ihren labyrinthischen Sälen und Gemächern, ihren prunkvollen Höfen und Freitreppen erinnern unmittelbar an die großen vorderasiatischen Residenzen. Dazu sind viele andere Gemeinsamkeiten im Geistigen und Künstlerischen festzustellen”. Webster, in 1964, was still making comparisons between the central court of the Asiatic palaces and the Minoan central court. The mural frescoes and techniques of construction were likewise

similar. But is this approach justified ? To evaluate it we must examine the typical features of Minoan palace architecture. They are as follows :

- a) A primary rectangular central court aligned N-S.
- b) Small internal courtyards or “light wells”.
- c) Identifiable ‘insulae’, derived from more or less independent buildings, grouped around the central court.
- d) Organic growth, upward and outward, made possible by using stairways and flat roofs.
- e) Downward tapering wooden columns with stone bases.
- f) Mud & rubble walls, with some stone features, plastered and bolstered with wood.
- g) Mural paintings on the internal walls.
- h) An irregular external outline, with no fortifications.
- i) Specialisation of function in different quarters.
- j) Main Entrances (indirect) at the four quarters of the compass.
- k) Storage of food in underground large jars or pithoi.
- l) An elaborate system of plumbing and sewage.
- m) Architectural symbols, the Double Axe and “Horns of Consecration” (now identified by Neumann as “wings”).

Where are we to look for an explanation of these features? Possible answers include the following :



**“Downward-tapering columns were intended to inhibit new growth from sprouting. The columns were wooden, but stood on stone bases. Minoan women worshipped these columns”.**

Minoan palace architecture was “autochthonous” and originated on Crete. I Like the Minoans themselves, Minoan architecture is a mystery (Schachermeyr 1929 p. 11 “im Dunkel”). I suspect this view is widely held, though seldom made explicit. It ranks alongside the autochthonous theory of Etruscan origins (Pallottino).

The comments made by Higgins suggest a more acceptable variant of this theory. Fluid architectural forms introduced into Crete by the Minoans from their original homeland were modified and crystallised by “an ancient architectural genius” (let us call him Daedalus) who designed Knossos and provided the prototype for the other palaces.

The Minoans were influenced by Anatolian building. II Trading contacts between Beycesultan on the Meander, and Knossos, are well established. Demargne (1964 : 93, with plan) sees “marked resemblances” between Beycesultan, “with its colonnaded and pillared halls”, and the palace of Mallia. At Beycesultan, also there is a main courtyard aligned N-S.

Seton Lloyd in Piggott ed. (1961 : 191) treats the Arzawan palace at Beycesultan (fig 12) as “planned in a way which partly resembled those of Minoan Crete, and elaborately constructed of brick and timber on a stone foundation.

Its unusual amenities included a system of sub-pavement passages, presumably for circulating hot air in the winter. There is also a walled enclosure full of large administrative buildings of a sort which would have justified the expectation of written archives...The central courtyard, with its galleries and long, columned upper storey, the monumental entrance and the grand staircase recall later Minoan palaces. The date is between 1900-1750 BC.” This makes the structure roughly contemporary with the earlier Cretan palaces.

Lloyd further states that despite the lack of written documents, “there is reason to believe that Arzawa at this time fell within the area inhabited by an Indo-European speaking people, speaking and writing the Luvian dialect”.

But the idea that the Arzawans were Indo-Europeans is just an assumption. The name Arzawa (\*A-ra-za-wa) looks African (Compare Arago, Azande etc), and they used a pictographic script. Hence the name Hieroglyphic Hittite. Arzawa included Cilicia within its borders. Cilicia suggests the African Kili (Kele). Had they fallen under Indo-European control? See Marangosis (2003 : 2) for a summary of the linguistic situation in this area M. II BC.



The converse theory, that influence went from Crete to Anatolia should be considered. Likewise the possibility that the “Arzawans” and Minoans were closely related in race, language and culture, and that they were non-Indo-European.

The palaces were modelled on those of Egypt. III Trade from Crete to Egypt and from Egypt to Crete is amply demonstrated (Demargne 1964 : 83) by archaeological finds and by literary references. The Linear scripts of Crete belong to the Egyptian tradition of “syllabische Schreibung” used to record foreign languages. They were preceded on Crete by a transparently hieroglyphic type script. Evans (1909) notes that blockmarks at Knossos and Phaistos are identical to masons’ marks on D XII and D XIII buildings in Egypt. But he regards the Egyptian marks as foreign.

Evans (1921: I, 290-291) traces Egyptian influence in deposits at Knossos back to before the proto-dynastic period. Some of the balcony arrangements have been compared to the Egyptian. Egyptian influence has been detected in the frescoes and minor arts.

Against it is the rejection by the Minoans of the injunctive type courtyard, the well defined rectangular enclosing

outer stone wall and of monumental stonework in general. The Minoan downward-tapering wooden columns, as too the central placement of internal columns within rooms is another problem. Likewise the numerous squarish small rooms of varying size, with interconnecting doors, staircases and wandering corridors. Besides, the Minoan planned their modules in feet, using a decimal or vigesimal system. The great Near Eastern builders worked with the cubit.

Perhaps we should look further east to the Indus civilisation at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. IV See Craven 1997 : 9 - 25). These large urban complexes have streets and lanes with Cretan style “small dog-leg corners” (Craven); and sewers and baths, comparable to the elaborate drains and “lustral” areas at Knossos. Not to mention granaries, phallic symbols (attributed to a black snub-nosed population of *Dasas*) and an (undeciphered) pictographic script. There is some evidence, too, for a bull cult (Rawson 1972 : 7 - 8), like that of the Minoans. At Lothal a brick-lined dock is evidence that these people were traders. The date, approximately 2500 BC – 1500 BC (Mortimer Wheeler), also fits. But the *Dasas* must be the Nilo-Saharan *Dasas* or *Dazas* of Africa.

Recent work on the Linear scripts associated with the Minoans suggests an African origin for the Bronze age people of Crete. V

The Minoan Linear scripts have much in common with the blockmarks used by the masons who worked on the palaces. Both script and blockmarks appear to have originated in West Africa, though they may have undergone Egyptian influence (Campbell-Dunn 2006). Evans (1909) found Minoan blockmarks in Egypt (D XII-XIII). Downward tapering columns suggest a hothouse climate which favoured rapid growth, which had to be arrested by placing wooden shafts upside down on a stone base.

Fraser's (1962) work on so-called primitive architecture identifies the ancient religious plan which underlies traditional African buildings and tribal architecture in general.

There is a strong sense of centrality. The centre, symbolising the authority of the state, tends to be left open, with an implied North-South axis. Important buildings look and open to the East, whence comes the rising sun. Burial grounds lie to the South. The Western or left side may be female associated, the right male associated, as in Fraser's

Diagram. Women are concerned with the house (*domus*), fertility and related activities, men with hunting and the fields (*agros*).

In Africa the typical settlement is the compound enclosed by an irregular, but more or less circular outer wall. Within this the dwellings of married males and their wives and families are grouped in clusters, with interconnecting doorways and staircases. As groups develop and grow additional rooms are added as required. Other changes follow deaths in the family. As the construction is mainly of mud or mud brick reinforced with wood, sometimes with low stone bases, additions and modifications of detail are readily made. Rooms may be round or squarish, with flat roofs used for sleeping and drying produce. Small stairways lead up and down. The low entrances are rectangular or semicircular. There are numerous interconnecting passageways running in all directions, and low walls which are easy to step over. Domestic animals live and have their coops, stalls etc within the compound. Conical granaries with thatched roofs are a typical feature. Perishable goods and food are stored underground in jars.

It is particularly instructive to look at the Yoruba palaces. Take Paul Oliver's (1989) description of Kumasi for

example. He notes that the Yoruba collected rain from the roof, as did the Romans with their *impluvium*.

"In the nineteenth century the earth-and stone palace of the Asantehene (divine king) of the Ashanti empire at the capital city of Kumasi covered some five acres. It had many courtyards with verandas and open screens and more than 60 rooms with steep, thatched roofs" (NEB 13, ps 160-161). The arrangement so described recalls Knossos, which was of comparable size. The name Kumasi parallels Kumasa in Crete.

Willett's account of Akure confirms our conclusion.

"The palace in Akure is one of the best preserved examples" (Willett 1973 : 128-9, with Plan 117). Among the various impluvial courtyards is the Great Courtyard about 150 by 70 feet, aligned east : west, and the tiny Aya courtyard about 9 by 4 feet. Akure however has been somewhat modernised, in spite of the conservatism of of the Deji, Adesida I (d. 1958).

Courtney-Clarke (1990 : 30-31) makes similar observations about African architecture in the context of a study of African painting. She adds that the buildings were plastered and painted by the women of west Africa,

and included many of the motifs used on Minoan Crete. The meaning of the triangles, the rope net, the zig-zag, for example, are explained in some detail (ps. 43-46). The practice of combining bas-relief with colour, a feature of the palace at Knossos, is referred to on p. 70.

The basic design of the Cretan palaces is on the African model. The strong sense of left and right around a north: south axis, the irregular external outline, the *ad hoc* construction, the stairways and passageways, the flat roofs, the conical granaries, the storage of goods in underground jars are typically African.

The specifics of the design are related to the Yoruba palaces, the size of the building, the verandas and open screens, the numerous rooms, the thatched roofs (Kumasi); the dimensions of the main courtyard, the impluvia -the "light wells" are really impluvia, as their limestone floors indicate- (Akure).

And the main features of the painted decoration are still in use in Africa, as Courtney-Clarke explains. As for the Double Axe symbol, it is the emblem of Shango, the Yoruba Storm God. Curiously enough , among the Spanish Basques, a double axe is still mounted in houses to repel lightning. This old custom, like other customs observed in remote parts of Spain, is African in origin.

We have at last found the prototypes of the Cretan palaces. They derive from the palace buildings of the Yoruba of Nigeria. Their more general characteristics are African. The *atria*, in particular, are Yoruban. Impluvia or "rain-courts" are used also in Senegal. The ultimate source however is the "box-house" of the African savanna. Near Eastern theories do not account for the features of the Cretan palaces and now must be abandoned.

NOTE : Philistine palaces have now been reconstructed with rain courts. Herodotus (II, 148) describes an African type labyrinth in Egypt, D XII.

Fine (1983 : 6) regards the Sumerian and Semitic palace at Mari on the Euphrates as similar to Knossos in plan and in many architectural features. I consider there was early African substrate in both Egypt, (early murals show black men), and Sumeria. See Emery (1961 : 30 - 31). Aref (2004 : 141, with refs.) mentions finds of Camares pottery and Cretan type architecture at Kahun (Faiyum).

## V

### RED MEN AND WHITE WOMEN

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**"The outlines of massed heads are sketched in black in a quick, impressionistic manner, upon a broad wash of *red-brown* for men, or upon an area left *white* indicating women".**

**HOOD**

**"And what manner of people were they? Not rude barbarians awaiting the dawn of Hellenic civilisation, but men and women with refined faces and graceful forms".**

**MacKENZIE**

In the wall paintings from Crete and Thera, the men are depicted with red flesh and the women with white. The same convention applies to terracotta figurines. Why?

Possible explanations include the following:

The men had a suntan. The women had white skin because they stayed indoors. I "In accordance with established Egyptian usage, male flesh was coloured red to denote a healthy outdoor tan, while female flesh was white, for a delicately nurtured lady would avoid exposure to the sun" (Higgins 1967: 30).

The women were of foreign extraction; slaves, abducted or immigrants (The "Sabine Women" theory). II

This is possible. The men no doubt practiced piracy (Thucydides I, 4-5) and may have picked up women when raiding foreign shores (Herodotus I, 1). In support we could cite the fact that five out of six skulls found on prehistoric (Minoan) Crete are long-headed (dolichocephalic); the remainder are round (Childe 1973: 316). This suggests a minority foreign population of a different racial type. Compare Johnston's (1919-22: I, 23) round-headed 'Strandlooper' in prehistoric Africa.

A generation or two of cross-breeding would have eliminated such a distinction however. Against this theory is the fact that Minoan women are shown in paintings as wearing aristocratic costumes and enjoying social equality with men. The Blue Ladies of Knossos gossip in an animated and carefree manner, using conventional hand gestures, like modern Italians. Beckwith & van Offelen (1983 : 25) illustrate hand gestures used by the Wodabe nomads of Africa.

The statuettes of "Snake Goddesses" also do not look like members of an inferior minority but figures of considerable social and religious significance.

The women used makeup, ie. white face paint or powder etc. III In favour of this theory is the use of eg. lead carbonate (a white substance) by Egyptian women as makeup; the use of white powder in the East and until recently as a face paint in British countries.

Against it is the fact that, to judge from the murals, the body of Minoan women is also white. If they were using makeup, to judge from the murals, it was a full-body treatment.

White skin colour was a conventional way of marking or emphasizing the gender of the women. IV



This is the commonest view. It is supported by similar conventions in Egyptian and archaic Greek art. It is thus comparable to such modern practices as blinding the hair artificially (if brunette), using false eyelashes, lipstick, etc. Theory four, it might be added, is compatible with theory three. If we accept it, provisionally, another question arises. Where did the practice begin? I.e. what was its original context?

The evidence in the author's opinion, points to the Niger-Congo speaking regions of Africa. Here the women whiten their entire bodies by applying lime (from crushed seashells) in a medium of pig's grease before appearing at social and religious festivals (Fuglestad 1998). V But one can only whiten one's skin if one is black to begin with. The practice began with the negroes of Africa.

A similar procedure is followed at initiation ceremonies prior to marriage, with associated female circumcision etc. In Africa, white or pale flesh is considered a sign of beauty in females and there may be deeper reasons. In Niger-Congo the word for "black" *bi* also means "evil", "bad". White being the opposite of black implies goodness, attractiveness (Westermann 1927: 310 *sub voc*). In Luba initiation ceremonies the face, arms and torso are whited with chalk. The area whited indicates the level

of initiation attained by the initiate (Roberts & Roberts 1997 : 128, with Fig. 115).

In the frescoes from Thera however, the girl boxers (they are clearly not male) are red. What is the explanation? These children have not yet reached the age of puberty, and so have not been initiated. So their skin colour is consistent with and confirms our hypothesis (Andronicos, Chatzidakis and Karageorghis 1975 : 48, pl. 11).

In Congo mythology God had three sons: the White, the Black, the Gorilla. The latter two disobeyed him. So God retired to the West Coast, taking the good White son and all his wealth with him (Fauconnet 1959: 485). [Pahouin region].

Compare the Western symbolism of the white wedding dress (which originally indicated virginity), white and black magic, etc.

The ultimate basis of such ideas may be the old antithesis between darkness (=death, danger, night) and light (=life, happiness, day). There is also a biological tendency for humans to choose partners who look different, thus blondes prefer brunettes and vice-versa (Montagu 1957:77).

We are left with our red men. Surely Negroes are black? Was the red flesh of males also a convention? Probably not. Many Negroes are in fact closer to red than to black. This is particularly true of the Horn and East Africa. We may also mention here the tribe known as the "Red Bobo".

There is however the possibility that black was avoided, as being the colour of evil. In this case Negroes would have been painted red, regardless of their real colour. If this is so, there is a distinction between Cretan painting and Egyptian painting, which showed Nubians and (and sometimes themselves) as black. The conventions of Cretan painting and of Egyptian painting are not the same. In Egyptian art women's flesh is often yellow.

Modern Masai males use red body paint however. Was there perhaps an early practice of reddening the males, to distinguish their gender? Today soldiers wear uniform, but in tribal societies they wore war paint.

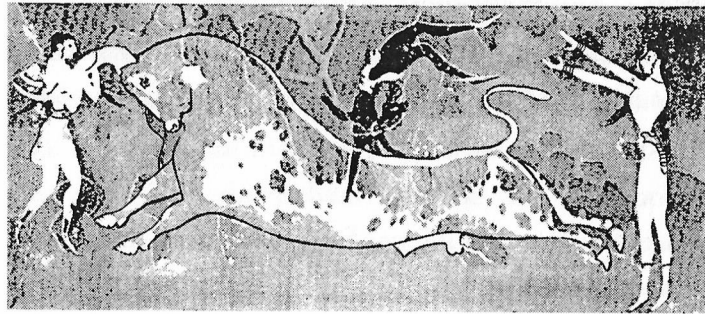
In this connection however we should mention an interesting and possibly relevant detail from Luba oral tradition (Roberts & Roberts 1997 : 56). The Luba, we are told, were preceded by the shadowy Ziba, tall, red-skinned "people of the lake". The Luba distinguish the graves of the Ziba on the basis of their pottery. If the Luba

go back to about 1500 years prior to the present (the Proto-Bantu period), these Ziba are earlier, perhaps early enough to be treated as candidates for the African colonists who entered Crete in the Bronze Age and founded what we call Minoan civilisation.

Modern research has established that there is a systematic change away from black skin colour towards a lighter shade as one moves southward and westward away from the Congo. To what extent this development had taken place in the period we are dealing with is perhaps an open question.

A detail of the clothing confirms that the men of Crete were African. Minoan males wear the codpiece or *penistasche*, common in Libya. The particular type worn in Crete, however, does not cover the scrotum. It is still worn in Togoland, by the Moba of North Togo, where it is made of soft leather or wool (Evans 1928, II : 35, note 2 citing von Luschan). Such a detail is highly significant, and perhaps provides a clue as to the original provenance of the Minoans.

But if the answer to our problem lies in the Niger-Congo area of Africa, how did these people find their way into prehistoric Crete?



**“The men are painted red. The women are distinguished as white. They wear male dress, but affect a female hairstyle”.**

“The bull acrobats, in addition to natural agility, required extensive training with the bulls.” (Platon 1971)

We know that in ancient times, the Phoenicians (Greek *Phoinikes*) or “Red Men” sailed their ships through the Red Sea, traded along the east coast of Africa, and, if Herodotus (IV, 42) is to be believed, circumnavigated the African continent (then known as Libya). They transported slaves, textiles, ivory and other goods back the same way to the Mediterranean.

Who were they? In historical times Arab traders from the Sinai Peninsula performed this function and spoke Swahili, an African *lingua franca*. And the archaeological evidence sources the Phoenicians to the Sinai Peninsula in the Neolithic period (see Moscati 1968). Sinai was known for mining and metals. Africans, we think, worked in these mines. At Sinai there was a mingling of races, oriental and African. From this mingling arose the Phoenicians.

By the early Bronze Age the Phoenicians occupied the Levant however. In Akkadian, they were the *Kinahhu* or “Purple People”. They called themselves the *Cana'an*, (Hebrew *Kena'an*). The region inland of the coastal Levant, including Ugarit, was the Canaan of the Old Testament. One is inclined to compare African Kana, Ghana, meaning “gold”. Again the Bible mentions a marriage feast at Cana.

This region was then occupied by the Philistines, who were depicted in Egyptian art as having red skin, eg. on the Medinet Habu tiles (Kahane 1969: 66 plate). According to the Old Testament the Philistines (whence modern "Palestine"), unlike the Semites of the region, were uncircumcised and spoke a non-Semitic language (Nehemiah 13: 24).

They came from Caphtor (Amos 9: 7), ie. Crete and its dependencies. A Philistine shrine used in worshipping Dagon has applied doves and snakes comparable to those of Minoan Crete (Tenney ed. 1975 II : plate facing page 1). And Philistine bichrome pottery has affinities with the Mycenaean "bird bowls" (Coogan ed. 1998 : 155, pl. ).

In classical times, the language of the Phoenicians was Semitic. But if they traded with Africa, no doubt they also spoke an African, probably a Niger-Congo-type language. In other words we equate the Minoans with the Philistines. The Philistines, we think, were originally African nomads like the pastoral Fulani, who speak a form of Niger-Congo (Atlantic group), and are of mixed Asiatic and Negroid descent. The Fulani are known for the red colour of their skin, which formerly lead them to be regarded as Semitic.

To summarise the argument the author considers the Phoenicians (better perhaps "Proto-Phoenicians") were the traders and pirates who occupied the Aegean and coastal parts of the Mediterranean in the Bronze Age. They will have been of mixed Negroid and Semitic extraction. They were the naval power of prehistoric Crete mentioned by Thucydides. They were among the leaders of the invading "Sea Peoples" repelled by Ramses III in the 12th c. BC. No doubt once repelled they went to join their cousins in the Levant.

NOTE: Autran (1920) envisages a "Phénicie égéenne peuplée de tribus asianiques... qui sont fleuries en Canaan entre 2500 et 1000 environ" based on agriculture, shipping, metalworking, commerce and industry. See p. 62, note 1, Philistines. This civilisation extended from Asia Minor and the Levant to North Africa, Italy and Spain. An Aegean technical vocabulary, distinct from Indo-European and Semitic, identifies it. See Glotz (1952: 222 – 227) for the same weights and measures used in diverse places linked only by seafaring traders ; eg the Egyptian *kit* and "Phoenician" talent.

NOTE: Hypothesis: Egyptian cities Tanis = Sais = Phoenician Tanit (goddess).

Minos (often translated King Minos) figures prominently in both the above passages. But who is Minos? Brandenstein thought the word Minos meant "king". It is prehellenic and its true significance is unknown. In both instances it is used without the article, as in the *Iliad* (XIII, 450, 451). In mythology however Minos is the son of Zeus and Europa and eventually became king of Crete. But myth is not a reliable historical source, as we will see. Many of the events told about Minos are fictitious. The story of the Minotaur is a good example. It was the progeny of a woman and a bull, and ate human flesh. This is not possible.

Thucydides says Minos was the first to establish a navy with which he dominated the Hellenic sea, driving the Carians out of the Cyclades and installing his sons as governors. Evidence for this navy can be seen in the wall paintings of Thera. His assertion that Minos expelled the Carians however appears to conflict with the Herodotean statement that the Carians served in the fleet of Minos. Thucydides is regarded as more reliable than Herodotus. But should we believe him? Does "expelled" also mean "enslaved"?

The existence of Minoan colonies can be verified by the placename Minoa, which has a wide distribution.

## VI

### MINOS AND THE CARIANS



"And the first person known to us by tradition as having established a navy is Minos. He made himself master of what is now called the Hellenic sea, and ruled over the Cyclades, into most of which he sent the first colonies, expelling the Carians and appointing his own sons governors".

THUCYDIDES

"The Carians are a race who came into the mainland from the islands. In ancient times they were subjects of king Minos, and went by the name of Leleges, dwelling among the isles... In his day the Carians were most famous by far of all the nations of the earth".

HERODOTUS



Pendlebury (1971 : 286) : "All over the Aegean the name Minoa survived into historical times. There is one in Siphnos, one in Amorgos, an island off Megara, one in Delos, one in Laconia, and others on the coasts of Syria, the West, and even Arabia".

So Minos did colonise the Cyclades, but also, to judge from placenames, Syria, the west, even Arabia. But were his sons also called Minos ? And did Minos really rule such a vast empire as this ?

Greek myth solves all problems by inventing personalities, typically "kings" where empire is involved. Was there really a king Minos ? Did he have sons ? Did Crete really possess a fleet that controlled the Aegean, and Syria, and the west, and Arabia ? Or should we look for some other explanation ? After all we do not know what Minos means. Why were the colonies called Minoa ? We do not know.

We now turn our attention to the Carians. The Carians invented three things, says Herodotus, the use of which was borrowed from them by the Greeks.

To fasten crests on helmets. I

To put devices on shields. II

They invented handles for shields. III Previously leather thongs were used, as typically in Homer. But Homer echoes African practice here.

All these inventions were military in application. Which says something about the Carians. Of the three listed, number I, crested helmets, is crucial. The Philistines are shown on the Medinet Habu reliefs wearing a crested hairstyle, a type of Mohican cut. A similar hairstyle appears on syllabogram 2 of the Phaistos Disk, which is thought to represent a Philistine head.

The same hairstyle is associated today with the Fulani of west Africa (Sieber & Herremann eds. 2000 : 28, plate 11). The Igbo of Nigeria also use this hairstyle (Ibid. plate 12). Judging from the artwork it was once more widespread. See the Igbo mask (Ibid. Cat. 62, female), a face mask from the Nguni River, Gabon (Ibid. Cat. 53), a staff from the Senufo area (Ibid. Cat. 3), a Yoruba figure from Nigeria (Ibid. Cat. 108). There are even examples from Ethiopia. All the regions which show evidence for this crest have Niger-Congo speakers.



“The crest was worn by fighting men in Africa. In Africa young men were “cocks”, aggressive birds of prey. This notion survived among the New Zealand Maoris”.

Hutchinson (1962 : 69) says : “A feather headdress of this kind was worn by some of the peoples who joined the sea raid on Egypt in 1223 BC, not only by the Philistines, but also by the Zakkarai and the Danuna. [Zakkarai perhaps incorporates –kar- (Carian)]. In classical times this headdress was regarded as so characteristic of the Carians of western Asia Minor that the Persians called them *Karka* (cocks), which is presumably the meaning of the word ‘Carian’ ”. Although this meaning cannot be confirmed, the hairstyle is suggestive of a fighting cock (a popular sport in Africa), and would be suitable for warriors. Originally a hairstyle, it came to be used as a helmet crest to make the warrior look taller and more fearsome. Compare the references in Homer.

It seems reasonable to treat this as evidence for an African origin of the Carians. Compare the African names Kari, Kare, Kali (Niger-Congo, Adamawa-Eastern, a branch of the Mbum). In other words the Carians, we think, were black men who spoke an African language. A single feather, as opposed to a feather crest, (seen on some Minoan frescoes), was a sign of authority or high office in Egypt.

Number II, devices on shields, can also be verified as having an African origin (Kerchache, Paudrat & Stéphan

1993 : 331, Hungaan charm). But number III is a reminder that the long shield slung with a leather strap is typically African.

Herodotus goes on to tell us that “Long after the time of Minos, the Carians were driven from the islands by the Ionians and Dorians, and so settled upon the mainland.”

[This assertion apparently contradicts the statement of Thucydides that Minos had expelled the Carians from the Cyclades, cleaning out the pirates (Carians ?) as far as possible.]

The Herodotean narrative continues as follows:

“The above is the account which the Cretans give of the Carians : the Carians themselves say very differently”, he adds. [“Cretans” and “Carians” are vague cover names for different stories, not actual sources].

“They [the “Carians”] maintain that they are the aboriginal inhabitants of the part of the mainland where they now dwell, and never had any other name than that which they still bear : and in proof of this they show an ancient temple of Carian Jove in the country of the Mylasians, in which

the Mysians and Lydians have the right of worshipping, as brother races to the Carians ; for Lydus and Mysus, they say, were brothers of Car. These nations, therefore, have the aforesaid right ; but such as are of a different race, even though they have come to use the Carian tongue, are excluded from this temple.

172. The Caunians, in my judgment, are aboriginals ; but by their own account they came from Crete. In their language, either they have approximated to the Carians, or the Carians to them – on this point I cannot speak with certainty. In their customs, however, they differ greatly from the Carians, and not only so, but from all other men. They think it a most honourable practice for friends or persons of the same age, whether they be men women, or children, to meet together in large companies, for the purpose of drinking wine”.

What are we to say about all this ? First, Herodotus does not have conclusive evidence regarding the Carians. As always he focusses on disputes, moral issues and on strange foreign customs, especially those likely to scandalise his audience (drinking wine in female company –compare the Etruscans).

The “Carian version” of Herodotus makes the Carians the original inhabitants of Asia Minor. The “Cretan version” claims they originally came from Crete. A recent historian has argued that the Carians were islanders who withdrew to the mainland, on the grounds that they occupy only a fringe part of Asia Minor. The Island of Icaria (prefix *i-*) might be used as evidence (placename), not to mention the myth of the flight of Icarus from Crete.

It is of course possible that the Carians, being “Sea Peoples”, previously occupied both the Cyclades and coastlands of Asia Minor, but were forced out of the islands by the Europeans (Greeks). This however creates a problem with the Thucydidean claim that Minos drove the Carians out of the Cyclades.

But “Minos” may have only begun the job of driving them out. It was continued also by the Hittites, who invaded from the east. One suspects that the “Sea Peoples” who later fought as mercenaries for the inland powers (Vermeule 1964 : 271) included the Carians and their brothers, the Mysians and Lycians, who originally occupied not only the Cyclades, but much of Asia Minor, were of similar racial extraction (Vermeule denies this), and were squeezed by the more highly organised Indo-Europeans on all sides. They took to their ships, which alone were left to them,

and became freebooting plunderers, the chaos known as Sea Peoples. “The deep mountain-circled harbors of southwest Anatolia offer perfect retreats for pirates” says Vermeule (Ibid). The Carians were pirates (Thucydides I, 4).

Conversely one might argue that, if the Carians came ultimately from Africa (as we think), they must have reached Asia Minor first. In the Homeric Catalogue of Ships (*Iliad* II, 867) the Carians are called *barbarophōnoi* “speakers of a foreign language”, and inhabit Miletos. We think the language was African. In *Iliad* (X, 428 – 429) the Carians, along with the Lycians, Mysians and Phrygians, are allies of Troy.

At Troy man-sized pithoi (Schliemann 1976 : Plate XI), like those of Crete and Africa, were used for storage. Rough Linear signs, like those of Crete, also appear at Troy, (often the swastika, a fire symbol, says Schliemann), not to mention “Nipple Vases” (Schliemann 1976 : No. 13, No. 70, No. 173, No. 207, No. 219) as at Crete and Thera, and “horned” serpents’ heads (Ibid. page 237). MacKendrick (1981 : 7) lists “double axes, scales, daggers, anvils, swords, talent-weights (in bronze, shaped like ox-hides), spears, mirrors, vases, bronze handles, diadems, calipers, harness-bits, fibulae (the ancient safety pins),

hammer heads, seals, beads, cauldrons" found by Schliemann at Troy in the so-called "Treasure of Priam". A number of these objects were in prominent use on Minoan Crete: double axes (symbol of the Yoruba Storm God), scales (for trade), ox-hide ingots (talent-weights), mirrors (which captured the soul); all of these also have African connections. The Trojans also used man-sized jars, comparable to the pithoi found on Crete, for storage underground.

The mirror, in view of its shape, signifies the moon, which controlled the fertility of women and of the crops. In Egypt mirrors had handles in the shape of Hathor, the Cow Goddess, or Bes, also a fertility figure. Mirrors were buried in women's tombs. The moon was also associated with magic. Round objects (sun & moon) were often inscribed with magical formulae or agricultural signs.

Cyprus also had an indigenous population, at Amathus, with a pictographic script which defies interpretation. It must be African. In the neighbouring Levant African placenames with vocalic prefixes indicate early African colonisation. Gaza was once called Minoa.

Furthermore the archaeological evidence indicates a Bronze Age migration from Asia Minor to Crete, not

vice versa. How & Wells (1928, Notes to Book I) observe however that weapons found in the island-graves do not resemble Carian weapons.

The reference to the Caunians clinches the matter. The Caunians must be the African Kau (Niger-Congo, Kordofanian), or Kaw (Benue-Congo), with ethnic suffix *-ni*. Both Carians (plural suffix *-ri*) and Caunians were famous in antiquity for their figs. The fig tree comes from Africa, where it was typically grown in a courtyard. It was also a product of Crete, where it was called *NI* "fig" ("within"). Africans growing an African crop. Both *KAUDONI* "Caudonians" and *KARI* "Carians" (?) occur on the Linear A tablets from Crete.

In mythology Caunus is the twin brother of Byblis, who formed an incestuous passion for him. Caunus, in horror, left his native city of Miletus, and moved to Caria, founding the city named after him. The girl Byblis however was turned into a spring of water by the nymphs. In Greek tradition Africans tend to be demonised, associated with unnatural practices (incest, cannibalism) and relegated to mythology. The story is not credible. But the metamorphosis can be explained in terms of the African belief in the external soul (James Frazer).



Of the Carians (and Leleges) the late (BC/AD) geographer Strabo (322) says pessimistically: "Now that most of the land has become desolate, and the settlements and especially the cities have disappeared, even if a man could give a definite account, he would do nothing useful, owing to the uncertainty and to the fact that the peoples have disappeared, a movement which began long since." Recent genetic research at Harvard has shown that the Etruscans, too, have disappeared, and have left no trace in the modern genetic record. Genetic analysis of Italian cattle however sources them to Asia Minor, confirming the views of Schachermeyr.

Like Strabo we must admit that there is much that we do not know about the Carians, and even more that we do not know about the Leleges (see Günter Neumann in *DKP* 3, 551). Herodotus seems to regard Leleges as an alternative name for the Carians. Pausanias (7, 2, 4) calls the Leleges *tou Karikou moira*. This ties them closely to the Carians. They do not rate a separate mention in the Catalogue of Ships, although they are found at Pedasus in the Troad (*Iliad* XXI, 86 – 87). Strabo (321, 611) tells us that ancient tombs and forts in Caria were called "Lelegian". See the closing chapter on Round Tombs.

But other ancient authors mention Leleges in Boeotia, Megara, Lakeldaimon, Messene, Pylos, Phokis, Lokris,

Aitolia, Akarnania, Thessaly, the islands of Leukas, Euboea, Astypalaea, Chios, Samos, the Cyclades, the Troad, Pedasos, Gargara, Antandros, Smyrna, Ephesus, Tralles, Miletus (also called Hē Lelegēis), Pisidia, Caria (Mylasa and 8 other cities). Of these Miletus is now known to have used a Linear script.

The towns listed were all occupied in the Bronze Age. It seems scarcely possible that such a large number of places could have been invented by so many different authorities as being occupied by Leleges. A more reasonable solution is to treat Leleges as roughly equivalent to Pelasgians (Pelasgians were everywhere), perhaps a slave class of Pelasgians however. This would explain the ubiquity of the Leleges in the Aegean.

Philippus, a Carian writer of the third century BC, makes the Leleges serfs of the Carians, a notion that is confirmed by Plutarch (*Quaestiones Graecae* 46, *Moralia* 302). See Philippus of Theangela (*FGrH* 741). Genealogies are lacking for the Leleges, which indicates they were slaves. I suggest that the Leleges were the rowers in the Carian fleet, in other words galley slaves. As we have seen, the Cycladic "Frying Pans" depict boats with banks of oars implying rowlocks. The Carians were the fighting men. The hapless Leleges performed a more menial task. When Minos drove the Carians out of the Cyclades they may in

some cases have been reduced to the role of Leleges. This would explain the Herodotean confusion between them. Probably both Carians and Leleges were black-skinned, unlike the red Minoans.

Aristotle apud Strabo ( 7, 321 ) refers to the Leleges as *planētes* "wanderers". Callisthenes ( FGrH 124 F 25 ) tells us that they migrated from Asia Minor to Greece in company with the Carians. This constant association between Carians and Leleges requires an explanation such as that offered in the previous paragraph. The Leleges may in fact be descended from the African Lele, a Bantu tribe near the Kasai River, a tributary of the Congo. The word has Niger-Congo reduplication, with *-ges* added. In Africa third syllables indicated subtribes. If they came from Africa they were wanderers indeed.

The "brothers" of Car, the Lydians and Mysians (who fought at Troy), unlike the Leleges, are likewise of warrior status. They must be the Luri (Alur) > Ludi, and the Mursi, both Nilo-Saharan tribes from the region of Chad. Chadic was near Niger-Congo. The Lukka, also from Asia Minor, have been linked to the Lycians.

Gurney in The Hittites (1954 : 47f) mentions the Lukka lands ("perhaps Lycia", or a "no man's land") in southern Asia Minor. The Lukka people appealed to Tawagalawas

in a dispute with the Hittites. The name Tawagalawas however looks like the Fula word *tawāngal* "coutume". As for Lukka, compare the Niger-Congo Lukha (Kordofanian). North of the Carians were the Arzawans, compare Azer (Soninke, Mande). These too may have been African, to judge from their architecture.

Georgiev (1966 : 253) mentions the late 19<sup>th</sup> century theory that "The languages of the ancient prehellenic populations of Asia Minor (Lycian, Lydian, Carian etc) were not of Indoeuropean or of Semitic origin, but belonged to a group *sui generis*" (my translation from the Italian). This view may well turn out to be right. This third language group, we think, was African. See Berr (Glottz 1952, viii).

We can now return to the problem of Minos. In Boeotia we find a rich man called Minyas, the mythical founder of Orchomenos, who gave his name to the Minyans, the clan to which the Argonauts belonged. He was said to have built a treasury. There is a tholos at Orchomenos known as the "Treasury of Minyas", which may have inspired the story. He was associated with Dionysus (a Cretan god) and the maenads (likewise Cretan), who resemble the Cretan Snake Goddesses. A tholos also has been excavated at Menidi in Attica. I relate Menidi to the African Mende, Mande (from \**Mani* "men" + \**di* "tribe").

A common African sound change would carry Minyas through to Minos [*ua* > *o*]. Among Niger-Congo languages we find Minya, a dialect of Mandekan (Mande), also Minungo, which is Benue-Congo. The word *MINU* occurs in Linear A from Crete. Niger-Congo *mi-nu* means “drink” (wine?). Wine was originally the drink of kings. A connection between Minyas and Minos might be suspected [*ua* > *o*]. I suggest Minoa however is from African Minona (with loss of *n*). Minona is an African fertility goddess and witch. If I am right, King Minos was really a woman. The addition of a masculine ending *-s* converted Mino-na, or Mino, into Minos. The syllable *-na* was a demonstrative/article. Minyas may have been an alternative form of the same name.

Near Orchomenos was Mycenaean Gla, said not to be the ancient name of the place. At Gla there was an island in a lake, extensive waterworks (dikes, ditches, clay pipes), as Vermeule observes (1964 : 161). The palace at Gla was L-shaped, “almost unique in the Aegean world” (but compare Gournia on Crete, the Gurma language in Africa), and reminded Vermeule (1964 : 266) of Crete, with its long corridors and rectangular compartments and “horns of consecration” (really wings). No doubt Minoan preceded Mycenaean occupation here (and probably at Tiryns, which also has Minoan waterworks).

Curiously the word *glā* is African (Armstrong 1967 : 16). It designates “the original empty nothingness and at the same time the ideas of movement, of awakening, of reawakening, of resurrection”. It is used of the Bambara sign system, “266 ideograms which form a nomenclature of all things”. The name must be original, and must go right back to the Minoan period.

The extensive Minoan empire, we think, was unified by religion (worship of the African snake goddess Minona) and trade (especially in wine), not politics. A king or emperor at this time is unlikely. Society was tribal. The rulers were petty chieftains, and divine child-kings (*wanaktes*), who were not permitted to grow up. But trading contacts were extensive and far-flung. They were maintained by the seagoing ships of the Red Men of Crete and their Carian associates, who, according to Herodotus, “owed tribute to no man”. Eventually, however, they were enslaved, and ultimately became galley slaves. Perhaps the black men depicted in the Captain of the Blacks fresco is evidence of this : black subordinates under a red commander.

NOTE: For child-kings see *Odyssey* XIX, 178-179 and Thomson in *JHS* (1943:52ff). They reigned 9 years.

Several statuettes from Knossos represent standing women wearing a full-length gown which leaves the breasts exposed. They hold snakes in or around their arms. One figure wears a tall hat of truncated cone shape; another a close-fitting cap with a feline sitting on it. Who were they?

Explanations offered thus far include the following:

Fertility Goddesses. I This theory is supported by the exposed breasts. But, unlike Mesopotamian fertility goddesses these figures do not have the pubis exposed or the hands applied to the breasts. The snakes might be treated as a fertility symbol. The meaning of the felines is less obvious. The high hat of one figure has parallels in the Levant (Frankfort 1970: 259, pls. 299 & 300), but also in Africa. Cats were regarded as demonic (Frazer 1987 : 656).

In African mythology, the invention of the skirt to cover the female genital was regarded as a crucial step in the progress towards civilisation (Fauconnet 1959). Fertility goddesses are a prominent feature of Bantu religion. The Minoan "over-apron" may be fertility-related. It also occurs in African female dress (Friedrich 1913: figs. 56-57).

## VII

### THE SNAKE GODDESSES



"Nothing, however, among these votive deposits can surpass in living interest the faience figures of the Snake goddess and her priestess". "Her skin is white, her eyes dark, she wears a necklace around her neck".

MacKENZIE

"This figurine could well serve as an exemplar of Cretan art, combining as it does the two dominant characteristics of grace and naturalism".

HIGGINS

Female Worshippers. II The raised arms of the figure with the feline might be regarded as a gesture of worship. But what about the other figures? Their pose rather suggests control over animals, in this case snakes, which is a feature of divinity or the "Mistress of the Beasts" motif, which appears also on a Minoan seal from Knossos (Wace & Stubbings 1963: 471, fig. 47) and is widespread in the Near East. The cat on one figure's head supports this interpretation. So we are back to theory I. Scenes on Minoan seals and signet rings do show Minoan women in similar costume depicted in a meadow, witnessing the epiphany of a male god, a tiny figure who descends from the sky (Wace & Stubbings 1963: 469, fig. 43).

Prostitutes. III Religious prostitution was common in the ancient Near East. See Herodotus (I, 199) for example. It was well-established on the neighbouring island of Cyprus, and on the Greek mainland at Corinth. But this theory does not account for the snakes or the elaborate costume, which hardly suggests that the figures are soliciting. The skirt is full length, concealing the feet, and the figures appear to be wearing a corset. Corsets are E. African.

The overall impression made by the statuettes is one of power and dread - more appropriate to a goddess than to a

prostitute. The find context of some statuettes (the sacral repositories of the palace) is religious and suggests a cult. The stone cross found with the goddesses is significant in an African religious context. It is one of the entoptic signs seen during spirit possession. Compare Roberts & Roberts (1997 : 126, Fig.110). The cross is also however a form of prestige money in Africa, and a sun sign (among the Ashanti). It has multiple meanings.

Witches. IV Snakes and cats, especially black cats, are a feature of witchcraft. In Mesopotamia the nude goddess Lilith, with her owls, subdued lions and taloned feet has the attributes at once of a fertility goddess, a "Mistress of the Beasts" and a witch (Frankfort 1970: 110, pl. 119). Witchcraft is endemic in Africa even today.

If we accept IV, our attention is again directed to Africa. Among Niger-Congo speakers, and elsewhere on this continent, we find a belief in the external or mobile soul (Frazer 1987: 677f). The souls of humans were thought to enter the bodies of snakes, cats, birds, especially at death. Compare the clay statuettes of women with doves, also from Crete (Demargne 1964: pl. 322). This is where the notion that witches could transform themselves into owls, cats, etc. no doubt originated. Likewise the doctrine of the werewolf, or man transformed into a wolf. Cf.



Burkert (1982: 90). The cat just might be the rare golden cat of the Cameroon.

Proto-Maenads ie. the predecessors of the Greek Maenads or female worshippers of Dionysus. V What the maenads were capable of can be seen from the Bacchae of Euripides, where they tear Pentheus limb from limb and eat him raw.

In Greek vase painting, the Maenads are shown holding felines and snakes. Maenads were known to expose their breasts and indulge in unseemly behaviour. They even ate snakes and small children (Dodds 1951: 270 ff and *passim*). Eating of children occurred on Minoan Crete, at Knossos (BSA 1986 : 333ff). And Dionysus occurs on the Linear B Tablets as *Di-wo-nu-so-jo* (Chantraine 1968: sub voc.). The eating of snakes is more at home in Africa than in Greece and a costume exposing the breasts fits the hot tropics. So too the brief male codpiece seen on Cretan male statues. There may be elements of the truth in all the above explanations.

If we look at other depictions of women in Minoan art, eg the frescoes, we find that curly hair and prominent, exposed breasts are typical. If we treat the white skin colour as ritual makeup, an African interpretation of these

tall, full breasted figures becomes reasonable. A possible prototype for the bell skirt of the snake goddess statuettes may be found in the African gourd figures (Roberts & Roberts 1996 : 205, Cat. 88, with note). But compare also the wooden stick figures with base inserted into a leather bundle (Roberts & Roberts 1996 : 179, Cat. 72 & 73, with note). The snake goddesses are notable for their great length below the waist, which may have owed something to wooden stick prototypes as commonly found in West Africa. They have no feet (a Yoruba characteristic says Christensen 1955), standing on their flounced skirt as a base. For a comparable African goddess statuette see Baumann & Westermann (1957 : 85, Fig. 26).

In Dahomey the water goddess Mami Wata wears cowrie shells and a serpent (Beckwith & Fisher 1999 : II, 156). Shells were found with the Snake Goddesses, and symbolise femininity in Africa (Beckwith & Fisher 1999 vol. II, 77). Voodoo (Vodun) was practised by the Fon, Ewe and Ga (Beckwith & Fisher 1999 : II, 168).

The solution to our problem can be found in Blier's book, African Vodun. Blier (1995 : 34, pl 21) reproduces a photo of a Fon altar dedicated to Minona (also called Na), goddess of reproduction and of witchcraft. This conical, mound-shaped object is distinguished by two breasts, but

is otherwise aniconic. A comparable *omphalos* was found at Knossos. One is reminded here of the Nipple Vases found at Knossos, but also on Thera (Doumas 1983 : ill. 62 – 63), and, later, at Cyprus (Groenewegen-Frankfort & Ashmole ill. 568), of a jug with breasts, now in New York.

But the most well known *omphalos* was at Delphi. The cult was associated with a snake, a chthonic creature. At Delphi the Pythian priestess, after washing and purifying herself, after drinking the water of the fountain Cassiotis and tasting the fruit of the bay tree, took her seat. Vapours, we are told, came up from the ground, and she inhaled them.

The Underworld is the abode of the dead, and the vapours came up, as a spirit, to possess her. It was this spirit which had prophetic powers, and uttered oracles. The priestess meanwhile, was in a trance. Her words had to be interpreted by a priest or *prophetes*. Perhaps this was because they were in a foreign language, we think an African language.

But to reconstruct this rite in full, we must go to Africa, to Dahomey, the home of the Voodoo cult. The Voodoo cult features prophetic possession, trance states and the reanimation of dead bodies.

The snake or python enters into possession of the priestess when she embarks upon her prophetic trance. In the Voodoo cult, to quote the words of Metraux (1959 : 36), an authority on the subject, “the queen gets on to the box in which lies the snake and -modern Pythoness – she is penetrated by the god ; she writhes, her whole body is convulsed and the oracle speaks from her mouth”.

One thinks of the cleft below the Delphic tripod. Meyer comments (wrongly) on an illustration of this incident from the Voodoo (1992 : 20, pl. 11) “this pregnant woman appears to be giving birth to a snake”.

The goddess who originally presided over these rites was Minona, African goddess of childbirth and prophecy. She it is who is represented by the snake goddess statuettes from Knossos. The white ladies of Knossos were her initiates. The task of the snake was not only to give voice to the spirit, but to make women pregnant. For was there not a soul in the snake, a soul which would give rise to new life.

NOTE: The fertility goddess Maka, associated with snakes, bulls, birds etc, has now been found on tablets from Greek Thebes (Godart in Renfrew ed. 1997).



**“The personage represented by the Snake Goddesses is the African Minona, a deity of fertility and childbirth. The snake is an ancestral spirit”.**

Prophecy and childbirth were thus inseparable. The soul of the grandparent passed into the newborn. And the cycle of life went on.

This incident is followed by the drinking of the blood of a sacrificial goat to seal the vow of silence, and then the *danse vaudou*. “This is the moment when the initiates are received into the sect. Possessed by the spirit the novices do not come out of their trance till a priest hits them on the head with his hand, a wooden spoon, or, if he thinks necessary, ox-hide whip.”

One may compare the whipping of the initiate on the frieze from the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii.

The Greek *omphalos*, the navel of the earth, is none other than the symbol of Minona, as can be seen from the photograph in Blier (1995 : 34, pl. 21), reproduced in her book African Vodun.

Among the Basques of Spain bullfights were once held in honour of the Virgin Mary. But the original patron of these fertility rites was the mountain goddess Mari, who can now be identified with Minona. The consort of Mari was a serpent. She is a Snake Goddess like Minona. Her name reminds us however of Mari on the Euphrates.

The influence of this goddess was widespread indeed. Mali and Mallia perhaps are the same as Mari. Root *ma* "mountain".

No doubt Minos, like the Minotaur, is just a myth. The real figure in this culture was Minona, the goddess and the witch. She is the personage that the Snake Goddesses represent. She is the true embodiment of the power of prehistoric Crete. Not by accident did Evans call his civilisation Minoan.

NOTE : Autran (1920 : 61) says that a large number of new-born (probably first-born) were found buried under the floors of Cretan sanctuaries "avec des serpents de bronze", following a cult attested among the ancient Phoenicians. Glotz (1952 : 262 – 280) discusses Minoan fetishism, "l'adoration d'objets naturels ou d'animaux, d'armes ou d'instruments", rocks, pillars, axes, shields etc. Fetishism originates in Africa and is still widespread on that continent.

## VIII

### WHO WAS DIONYSUS?



**"In origin Dionysus was simply the god of wine ; afterwards he became god of vegetation and warm moisture ; then he appeared as the god of pleasures and the god of civilisation".**

**GRAVES**

**"Satyrs and silens, ribald creatures with snub noses, bushy beards and the ears and tails of horses, come into Greek art in the wine-god's train at about the beginning of the sixth century".**

**ROBERTSON**

The origin of Dionysus is a much debated subject. But three main theories are prevalent.

Dionysus came from *Thrace*. I

Dionysus is a *syncretism* of various gods. II

Dionysus derives from the Cretan *Zagreus* cult. III

We intend to argue a case that Dionysus has connections with the *Zagreus* cult, but ultimately originates in Africa. The vast literature on theories I, II and III will not be reviewed here (See Fauth 1979 : 77-85 DKP, Band 2 for an overview, with bibliography).

For most interested persons the illustrations in Greek vase painting will have been the first contact with Dionysus and his entourage. These show the god holding a wine cup, and accompanied by maenads, female devotees of the god, and satyrs, ithyphallic males with goat's ears and goat's tail, an intoxicated throng wearing leopard skins, brandishing snakes, felines and the thyrsos, a fennel stalk surmounted by a pine cone and entwined with ivy and vines. Flutes and tympana are a constant feature, and are used to produce a state of ecstasy. Sometimes centaurs, horses with a human head and torso, are also shown among the cortege.

The centaurs and satyrs are now thought to be a later accretion to the cult. However Burkert (1982 : 88) notes a similarity between the costumes of the Greek centaurs and satyrs and those of the "leopard men of Africa who conspire to assassinate others and practise cannibalism". The centaurs, satyrs and silens (associated with Dionysus earlier than the satyrs) still have animal attributes : animals' ears, tails etc which point to their original function of animal impersonation. But the maenads and Dionysus are certainly original.

This impression is confirmed by Euripides' play the Bacchae, which is regarded as the most authentic representation of Dionysus at work. The Bacchae are the maenads. Bacchus is one of the names of Dionysus, but the word is also applied to his devotees.

In the Bacchae King Pentheus opposes Dionysus, and treats him as a corrupting influence. He has the god put in chains. But the chains miraculously fall away. And Pentheus, under divine influence, dresses as a woman, goes up Mount Cithaeron and attempts to watch the rites from a tree. His wife Agaue and his aunts mistake him for a lion. They seize him and tear him to pieces with their bare hands.



The essence of the cult appears to have been ritual cannibalism, the tearing to pieces or *sparagmos* of the god in the form of an animal (bull, goat, snake, lions, leopards, or even a child), and the consumption of him in this form “the horned child”, so that his worshippers could partake of the godhead. The maenads appeared with flames on their head, or carried torches.

I consider that the word “maenads”, usually translated “mad or frenzied ones”, is to be derived from Niger-Congo *mana*. This word, *ma-* (liquid/mass prefix) + *na* “fire”, means “flame”, and later “wine”. The original intoxicant used by the maenads however may not have been wine, but spruce-beer laced with ivy (Jane Harrison in Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (1903), viii).

The maenads tore up trees in their frenzy, and I take the thyrsos twined like a tree with ivy, to ultimately represent a tree. One of the names of Dionysus was “Dendrites”, the tree god. Though this is not its historical symbolism. In its current form it is a phallic symbol. In some cases the maenads carry pestles.

The origins of Greek drama have been traced, by some, to the Dionysiac mystery cults and processions in honour

of Bacchus. In Africa the native theatrical performances have been connected with hunting (animal masks, skins of animals) and agricultural magic (Traoré 1958 : 23 etc). Music and dance are central to the action.

To support the details of our argument we must look also at the mythology. Dionysus, we are told, was the son of Zeus, who came to Persephone in the form of a snake.

The child was named Zagreus, the “hunter”. The root of this word is the Minoan *za*, which means “life”. It is connected with Greek *zagre*, a pit for the capture of live animals, and also with Cypriote *zaei* “lives and breathes”. The word applies not only to animals but to plants.

Hera, in a fit of jealousy, sent the Titans with whited faces, who caught the divine child, tore him limb from limb and ate him. This brings us back to the motif of women having intercourse with snakes, and to the practice of *sparagmos* and eating the god. The Titans, in this account, are like maenads, with white faces (masks ?). Their name, if we give it its Niger-Congo etymology from *ta*, means “the gobblers” (of hard food, ie in the original account the god was not cooked).

For the motif of tearing a child apart we may compare the story of the daughters of Proetus, King of Tiryns, who dismembered and ate their own children, driven mad by Dionysus, and the daughters of Minyas from Orchomenos, who tore one of their children apart. At Chios and Tenedos a human victim was torn to pieces at the rites of Dionysus. At Potniae in Boeotia tradition had it that a child had formerly been sacrificed to Dionysus (Frazer 1987 : 392).

Ultimately we are dealing with myths based on the practice of treating humans as prey animals (See Herodotus on the customs of the Scythians and Issedones). Diodorus (V, 29, 5) describes how the Gauls nailed human heads to their houses, like trophies of hunted animals (Hartog 1988 : 160, 161f etc). The use of heads as drinking cups and the drinking of blood in lieu of wine were a feature of these "hunts". Cannibalism is associated with head-hunting.

"Only in the more primitive cult of Sabazius", says Dodds, "and perhaps in Macedonian Bacchism, was the living snake as a vehicle of the god, actually handled in ritual in classical times". Dodds however hesitates to agree with Dieterich, that this "can signify nothing else than the sexual union of the god with the initiate".

Most of the elements of this scenario can be paralleled from ancient Crete. The snakes, the felines, the bulls, the torn up trees, women having intercourse with snakes, and, no doubt, the eating of human children. The ivy is also important on Crete, where it has religious significance.

Wine is thought to have been introduced into Greece from Crete. The word *oinos*, Greek for wine, is allegedly Cretan (Graves 1960 I : 110). It is indirectly related to Latin *vinum*. Ernout & Meillet (1959) however treat the word as a Mediterranean lexeme and inform us of the Semitic forms "reposant sur *wain-*". Stapleton gives the Swahili *mvinyo* "wine", which may also be related. The origins of wine are now associated with Armenia and the Caucasus.

Dionysus himself does not appear in the Cretan artwork, unless he is the "Village Mayor" on the Harvester Vase (it really depicts a sowing festival). The leader of the sowing however does not resemble Dionysus as we know him, and is followed by a male, not a female entourage. Females were already prominent in the rites of Egyptian Osiris however, the equivalent of Dionysus in their mythology.



“The unbridled behaviour of the retinue of Dionysus was seen as a drunken affront to morals. But it goes back to a time when man was the hunter, and at the same time the hunted. Humans and beasts were once both regarded as prey”.

Dionysus, of course, is also associated with Greek drama. But drama, we consider, has its beginnings in African mask festivals. Dionysus is the god of the mask *par excellence*. Sometimes he is masked, sometimes he has a mask-like face. Greek drama was always performed in masks. And the female parts were played by men, as in Africa. The choruses often feature animals (men in animal dress).

The practice of wearing animal masks derives from hunting. Hunters wore the head, and pelt, of the prey animal in order to creep up on it unawares. This led to the wearing of animal masks at various festivals. Human masks were also worn. These generally mark the wearer as a spirit, a ghost. Adandé mentions masks and “imitation du pelage des animaux, dont ils exécutent les pas en dansant” (cited by Traoré, page 23).

The commonest occasions for wearing masks in Africa were threefold : fertility festivals, funerals and initiations.

Of these the fertility festival has strong connections with Dionysus. Giant *phalloi* were carried at Athens in the Dionysiac processions. And the comic drama retains clear fertility connections : the padded *phalloi* worn by the actors, for example. The wearing of outsize *phalloi* is a feature of African initiation ceremonies (Beckwith

& Fisher 1999 : I, 68, 69, 70). The African Nuforis (Beckwith & Fisher 1999 : II, 306-309) performed comic and acrobatic antics in padded costumes like those of the Greek comedians.

In fact *komōidia* derives from Niger-Congo *ko*, meaning “woman” or “female genital”. The Satyr Play, also, has obvious fertility connections. Satyrs are generally shown on Greek vases as ithyphallic, bald creatures, making unsubtle advances to maenads. The historical Greeks were circumcised, which suggests an African fertility cult.

The wearing and parading of outsize *phalloi* is well established in Africa, but something similar was also known in Egypt. Herodotus (II, 48) :

“The festival [of Dionysus] is celebrated almost exactly as Bacchic festivals are in Greece, excepting that the Egyptians have no choral dances. They also use instead of *phalli* another invention, consisting of images a cubit high, pulled by strings, which the women carry round to the villages”. (Rawlinson’s translation).

A marionette theatre was observed by Paul Soleillet among the Somono of the Niger. Talbot (1923) found a type of puppet show at Awa in southern Nigeria (See Traoré 1958

ps. 28 – 29 for the reference). Strings were regarded as a means of magic.

Herodotus says that Melampus introduced the name of Bacchus and ceremonies with the *phallos* from Egypt into Greece. Melampus means “Blackfoot”, and it is possible that he was a black African. All these practices began in Africa, from where they were transferred to Egypt and then to Greece.

Tragedy, I think, is originally connected with funeral rites. Most Greek tragedies are concerned with death, generally violent death, with overtones of ritual pollution. This may explain the unusual Stilt Walkers vase in the University of Canterbury (Trendall 1971 : pl. XX, XXI).

In Mali stilt walkers are brought in to purify the village after plague or pollution (Hollyman & van Beek 2001 : 52). Often too there is cannibalism or something equally horrible. Tragedy typically ends with a *kommos* or lament, such as we would expect at a funeral.

As for initiation, instances abound in Greek drama of young men being sent away from home, only to return in circumstances which require the sudden attainment of maturity. Take Orestes for example.

Surely the following passage, taken from Price's book Made in West Africa (1976 : 132), has something to tell us about the origins of Greek drama.

"Darkness has already fallen and the drums have called the people together around the open dancing-place. An archway of palm branches has been set up as an entrance for the masks to come through. Men are already dancing on the bare beaten earth when the first masks appear. Below the pale painted face of the Gelede masks the bright coloured costumes cover the dancers from head to foot, flapping and swinging as they dance and sing. One of the masks is the wife of Efe, the great and powerful one..."

The description is taken from a theatrical type performance at Dahomey. But it has much in common with Greek drama, the masks, the male actors playing female parts, the dancing, the primitive stage entrance. This I think is where drama first began.

Much has been made of Nysa, the alleged birthplace of Dionysus. The name is widespread indeed, and includes a Nysa in Thrace. Herodotus however mentions a Nysa in Africa, which may be the original one, and not the place in Thrace. It is "beyond Egypt in Aethiopia" (Herodotus

II, 146) and is probably the same as "Nysa the sacred" (III, 97) where the Aethiopians hold festivals in honour of Dionysus.

In the same passage Herodotus refers to the demigod Pan, another goatish fertility figure, who chases shepherd boys with erect *phallos*. Pan takes his name from Niger-Congo *pá* meaning "wood or bush" (or "full"). He is in fact a woodland god. And the pan-pipes were an African invention (Baumann & Westermann 1957 : 183, fig. 108).

One wonders if Dionysus does not derive, in fact, from African *dya* "food, eat" and *ni* "water, drink". These terms refer among the Bambara (Dieterlen 1951 : 189) to the soul *ni*, originally a water soul (Niger-Congo for water is *nu/ni*) since it passes into this element at death, and *dya* the double of opposite sex, which combines with the *ni* to form a human being. Which would incidentally provide an explanation of the sexual ambiguity of Dionysus.

Plants also have a *ni*, as Dieterlen tells us. "Les animaux," says Dieterlen (1951 : 60), "sauvages ou domestiques sont également animés d'un *ni* et d'un *dya*. Les végétaux ont un *ni* ; celui de l'arbre est situé dans les bourgeons et assure sa croissance et sa vie. Celui des céréales nécessaires



à la vie des humains fait l'objet de soins constants au cours des rites agraires." Plants however do not have a *dya*. They do not eat.

The same root *ni/nu* may occur not only in Nysa, but also in *numphai*. Nymphs, it will be remembered dismembered Orpheus, the devotee of Dionysus, and tossed his head into the river. According to myth it floated downstream crying the name of his beloved, "Eurydice". The Yoruba believe the head is inhabited by a demon, which explains its retention of the power of speech after separation from the body.

Furthermore "Les cheveux contiennent une partie importante du *ni* de l'individu." (Dieterlen 1951 : 66). One is reminded of the story of Nisus, whose fateful hair was shorn by his daughter before he went into battle against King Minos.

The derivation of Dionysus from *dya* + *ni* is not without difficulty however. The Linear B *di-wo-nu-so-jo*, which is without context, is thought to be an early form of Dionysus. If so the word has a digamma which requires explanation. Possibly it is just an optional glide. In any case our interpretation be sustained if we posit an early form *\*di-wa*. This would account for both *di-wo* and *dya*.

It is known that the sound *a* changes to *o* in Crete and also in Africa. And the digamma was lost at an early period in ancient Greek.

Dionysus would then be the god of transformation, of the passage of the soul from one form of life into another. Certainly a number of his myths end with a metamorphosis. Thus the daughters of King Minyas were turned into a bat, an owl and a crow.

The god himself undergoes frequent transformation, into a bull, a lion, a leopard for example. Or a goat. In the story of his encounter with the pirates the mast becomes a vine, the oars become serpents, the sailors are changed into dolphins and fish.

His association with the Underworld, seen in the story of his birth to Persephone, and in the tale of Orpheus, for example, is due to the fact that death is the time at which the soul is separated from its original body, and passes on into another, be it human, animal or plant.

We see Dionysus therefore as emerging from a transmigration figure, representing the ability of the soul to take upon itself various bodies. This belief was not at home among the Indo-European Greeks in its original

form. Like many concepts it was personified by the Greeks, and took shape in the figure of Dionysus, who was ultimately reduced to, or syncretised with, a god of wine and vegetation. His ability to take different shapes became a memory. His power was then thought of rather as the transforming power of alcohol.

The sacramental effects of eating the god were submerged, later to reappear in the Christian eucharist. But the "body and blood" have now been replaced by the communion host and wine, which are regarded by most Christians as symbolic.

It should not be forgotten however that Dionysus was originally a god of cannibalism. And that "he" was also something more, a god of life, death, and rebirth, a god of the external, the transmigratory soul. All these ideas have their origin in Africa.

We conclude this section with a quotation from Dieterlen (1951 : 164f) : " Le Komo est une société qui englobe la plus haute puissance divine, les hommes, les plantes, jusqu'à la fin du monde ; il est le gardien des âmes. Quand il n'y aura plus de vie sur la terre, ni hommes, ni animaux, ni plantes, le Komo réveillera les âmes des êtres morts dont il a la charge pour l'éternité".

Perhaps the so-called "Village Mayor" who was responsible for the sowing festival, was really "Le chef du Komo, qui est divin". If so, this personage is the African prototype who underlies the Greek Dionysus. Dionysus was associated both with the *kōmos* (revel) and with the *kommos* (lament).

The word *komo* has survived as a placename. Thus the southern port of Minoan Crete was called Komo. In Africa there is a Komo language in the Congo, and also a place called Comoe on the Ivory Coast. Not to mention the Comoros Islands. In Bantu however the word *komo* means "cow", "ox". The sky cow nourishes the infant pharaoh in Egypt. The bull was widely recognised as a divine, a symbol of weather and water. It was associated with the Great Mother. Bull and goddess statuettes are found together in tombs. The horns were identified with the crescent moon.

NOTE : Graves ed. (1959 : 81) connects Dionysus with Adonis and with Hay-Tau (Ba-Tau) of Nega. Adonis is from N-C *do* "tree", Ba-Tau is African (Ba "lord", Tau = *ta* "tie"; Greek *tauros* "bull"?). Frazer (1987 : 281) recalls Baal and the bull of Phalaris.

## IX

### WHAT WAS THE MINOTAUR ?



**“He was a young man with a bull’s head, and he lived in the middle of a labyrinth, awaiting his victims. What they usually called him, though, was the Minotaur”.**

**CALASSO**

**“When a Dinka boy comes of age he is given a young bush calf. This becomes his ‘namesake ox’, after which he himself is named. For the next few years he will identify extraordinarily closely with the young bull, imitating it and emulating it”.**

**FISHER**

What was the Minotaur, the fabled monster of ancient Crete, who lived in the labyrinth and, according to legend, devoured a diet of Athenian youths and maidens? Is there a reality behind the myth?

According to the story the Minotaur was half bull and half man, the progeny of Pasiphae, who had intercourse with a bull. I Each year seven Athenian youths and young women were sent from Athens as tribute, and were eaten by the Minotaur, which lived in a labyrinth at Knossos. Finally the Athenian hero Theseus put an end to this practice by entering the labyrinth and slaying the monster, aided by Ariadne and her ball of string.

But therianthropic monsters do not exist and ungulates eat grass, not human flesh. The monster, in the form described, clearly did not exist, and was not killed by the Athenian hero.

The bull of Poseidon. II Posedon sent a bull from the sea as a sacrificial animal. King Minos neglected to sacrifice the animal and Pasiphae had an unnatural relationship with it which culminated in the birth of the Minotaur.

Bulls do not come from the sea. And if Pasiphae did have a relationship of this kind with a bull, no progeny would have ensued.

The Minotaur was the bull or bulls depicted in the bull-jumping frescoes and statuettes from Knossos and elsewhere in prehistoric Crete. III

A miniature fresco from Knossos shows both men and women (dressed as men) jumping over the back of a bull. The gender of the participants is indicated by their colour on the fresco, white for women, red for men. Other depictions in art show similar incidents. And the gold cups from Vapheio illustrate the capture of bulls by means of a decoy cow. Bull sports were clearly an integral part of the Cretan way of life. The numerous bull rhyta also testify to the importance of the bull in ritual.

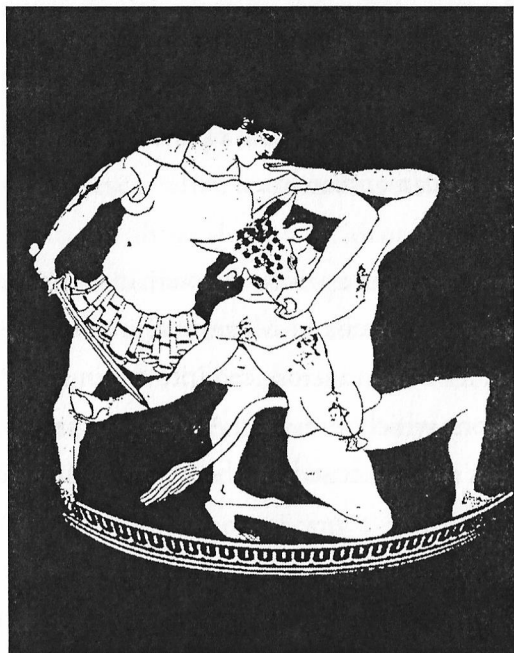
In other words the Minotaur was a real bull, without human features. No doubt the bull sports were a type of fertility rites. Bull jumping is known as a fertility ritual from East Africa (Beckwith & Fisher 1999 : II, 26-32). For the bull represents fertility. In real life a bull may impregnate fifty cows in one night.

Whether a Minoan woman had intercourse with the bull is another question. For a woman to have sex with a bull is difficult, but not impossible. Compare the stories about the Empress Theodora having sex with a lion. The practice

would make sense in terms of a fertility rite. So the myth of Pasiphae may have some basis in fact. We know that intercourse with snakes still takes place in the African Voodoo cult. Roberts & Roberts (1997 : 148, Note 12), referring to accounts by Burton (1961), mention a deity “described as a woman united with a buffalo”, or “the offspring of a woman and a buffalo”, also animal bodies represented with the head and chest of a woman. So the myth has African antecedents.

Bull sports were once widely known in Africa, and are still practised at Pemba in Mozambique. Bull fighting is thought to have been introduced into Spain and Portugal by the Moors, which gives it an African origin. In ancient times it was also practised on the Greek mainland.

On Crete the bull fighters carry daggers. The bull was probably killed, as we can infer from seal representations and from the bull rhyta. Perhaps the blood of the beast was drunk from these. In remote parts of India the bull is tethered with a rope and slain. At Crete the unfortunate beast was infibulated, as can be seen from a seal. Infibulation was an African practice, and very painful. This must be connected with fertility.



“Early depictions show a man wearing the mask of a bull. The bull was the god, who was slain and eaten in a eucharistic rite”.

The Minotaur was a symbol of cannibalism. IV Cannibalism was anathema to the Greeks, and could only be associated with monsters, the Cyclops, Kakos, the Laestrygonians etc. The idea of people eating human flesh was unthinkable.

The unfortunate youths and maidens were probably real tribute. Human tribute has been exacted even in relatively modern times. They would have been killed and eaten. Cannibalism was not unknown on Crete, to judge from the archaeological evidence. Cannibals prefer to eat the young, because the meat is more tender. Hence the specification of “youths and maidens”.

In the Campstool Fresco from Knossos we see boys dressed as girls, passing around a chalice or love-cup. The contents of the cup may well have been human blood. We recall that the body of a child found at Arkhanes in Crete had been drained of the blood before burning occurred (Sakellerakis 1991). Cross-dressing is a feature of the Bantu secret societies.

In Africa ritual cannibalism was a widespread practice until relatively recent times. Among the Dogon, for instance, “Rumour has it that at important ceremonies the priests and dignitaries of the tribe used to eat human



flesh" (Leuzinger 1980 : 81, with fig. 22). Perhaps the priest wore a bull's head at these ceremonies, and this gave rise to the story that the youths and maidens were "eaten by the Minotaur".

This is typical. Cannibalism, wherever it was practised, was confined to special, usually religious occasions. The eating of human flesh had special significance, and was not part of the daily diet.

This is true of the cult of Dionysus, who was known as the *axios tauros*, the "worthy bull". Small children were torn to pieces and eaten by the practitioners of the cult.

Echoes of non-ritual cannibalism do occur however in Greek mythology, and are particularly associated with places occupied by pre-Greek populations during the Bronze Age.

Thus Tantalus (N-C root *ta* + nasal = "eat") of Lydia invited the gods to dinner and tested their omniscience by serving up his son Pelops in a stew. All of the gods realised the gruesome nature of the dish except Demeter who, in her grief for her lost child Persephone, absentmindedly knawed Pelops' shoulder. Tantalus is punished for this misdemeanour in Tartarus.

A similar story is attached to Lycaon King of Arcadia. When Zeus and Hermes toured Arcadia, Lycaon served Zeus with the flesh of a Molossian slave. Zeus in his anger blasted Lycaon's sons with a thunderbolt and turned Lycaon into a wolf.

Both these stories go back to a period when serving a cooked child was regarded as a normal form of hospitality. Among cannibals children were considered more succulent than adults. In Africa the juiciest morsel was the "buttocks of a young girl" (Davies 1981), ie cannibal rump steak.

The version of the story which involves testing the gods to see if they could distinguish human flesh from animal flesh is sophisticated and relatively late. It belongs to the period when people were debating the rather academic question of whether there was a difference between human and animal flesh.

In another version of the myth Tantalus is said to have stolen *nectar* and *ambrosia*, the special drink and food of the gods, and given it to his friends. We know that ambrosia had the power to make those who ate it immortal. The etymology is from *am-* "not" and *brotos* "mortal". I relate nectar to Greek *nekus* "corpse", latin *neco* "I kill"

(violently) and their cognates. In other words the special food of the gods, which made them immortal, was human flesh and blood. In the Egyptian Cannibal Hymn the gods eat human flesh. The gods alone were immortal.

Atreus of Mycenae however invited his brother Thyestes to a banquet at which he served him with the flesh of his own children. When Thyestes had eaten, Atreus had the hands and feet of the dead children brought in on a tray. Here the banquet has been converted into a revenge motif. No man wants to eat the flesh of his own children. It is a perversion of the hospitality banquet drawn from a cannibal context.

Revenge is also the motivation in the story of Procne and Philomela. The sisters decide to punish Tereus King of Thrace, for the rape of Philomela. So they kill Itys, son of Tereus, cut up his body and cook his flesh. This they serve to Tereus for a meal. Afterwards they bring in the head of the boy to show Tereus what he has eaten. The gods resolve the situation by turning all the protagonists into birds.

The fact that the meal is served at a festival of Dionysus may or may not be relevant. From the viewpoint of cannibalism however it should be pointed out that, among cannibals the head and hands were especially prized. The

head contains the brains, a true gourmet's delight. In some restaurants in Asia the speciality is still a course of live monkey's brains.

But in classical literature the bringing in of the head and hands is a climax of the macabre. Thyestes and Tereus both vomit at the sight.

Closer to the original state of affairs is the story of Tydeus and Melanippus. At the battle before Thebes, Tydeus, who is dying, eats the brains of his enemy Melanippus. Eating the brains was believed to be a way of obtaining the strength and *mana* of one's foe. We are given the added detail that Amphiaraus threw the severed head of Melanippus to Tydeus, so that he could devour the brains raw. The goddess Athena had intended to confer the gift of immortality on Tydeus, but this grisly display was too much for her, and she changed her mind.

Rumour had it that human sacrifice, another practice banned by the classical Greeks, occurred at the altar of Zeus in Arcadia. But excavations have not found any evidence to support this. According to one version of the myth Zeus turned Lycaon into a wolf for having sacrificed a child at the altar of Lycaean Zeus, which Lycaon had founded. From that time onward, every time a sacrifice

was made at that altar, a man was turned into a wolf. If however after eight years the wolf had not eaten human flesh, it returned to human form.

All these myths are associated with places in the pre-Greek Aegean, Lycia, Thrace, Mycenae and Arcadia. They contain prehistoric echoes of African cannibal practices, references to the external or mobile soul and to changes of shape, or metamorphosis.

They are evidence that the prehistoric Aegean was once occupied by a substrate population from Africa. The myth of the Minotaur encapsulates these traditions, and makes them more acceptable to a Greek audience.

## X

### PHAEACIAN SPORTS

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**“But the things in which we take a perennial delight are the feast, the lyre, the dance, clean linen in plenty, a hot bath and our beds”. [King of the Phaeacians, in the Odyssey].**

**GRANT**

**“Trade was not for heroes. It was a dangerous insult when a young Phaeacian told Odysseus that he did not look like an athlete, but like a man who sailed for gain in trade”.**

**ANDREWES**

The Phaeacians (*Odyssey* V-VIII) of Homer are thought by many to be the people of Minoan Crete. They are known for their gold and bronzework, and live a life of plenty, even enjoying the luxury of warm baths in earthenware bathtubs (*Odyssey* VIII, 450 f). In the palace of King Alcinoos there are 50 serving women who grind grain, weave wool, press olive oil. Pears, pomegranates and apples, figs and olives are grown in orchards, and there is a vineyard "that gives ample produce". The Phaeacian men are "expert beyond all others for driving a fast ship on the open sea", just like the Cretans of King Minos.

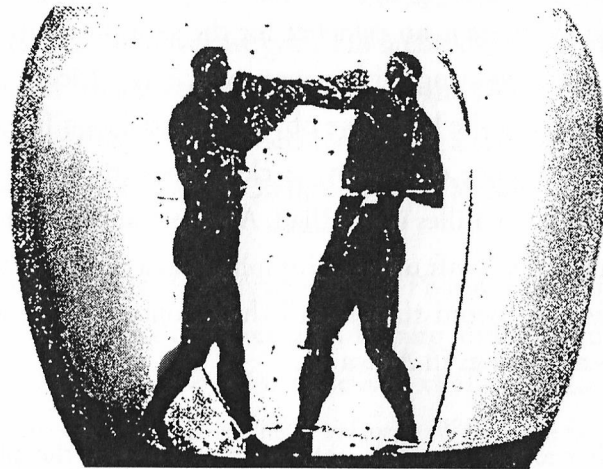
Most crucial to our argument the Phaeacians "surpass all others in boxing, wrestling, leaping and ...running" (*Odyssey* VIII, 102-3). Odysseus is challenged to take part in sports, and initially refuses. When pressed he throws the discus like a champion, and boasts of his prowess with the bow.

Unfortunately Minoan civilisation has left little evidence of sports apart from the bull games. There is the fresco from Thera showing girl boxers, however, which is significant not only for the participation of women in violent combat, as in Africa, but also for the fact that the boxers wear a glove on the right hand only, which again can be paralleled in Africa (Riefenstahl 1982 : 213-14). In

fact the African glove resembles the Roman *caestus* which incorporated pieces of metal, and was intended to do as much damage as possible to one's opponent.

Sport originated in training for warfare. The shot put and discus involved the throwing of heavy stones, which were originally used as weapons, eg in Homer's *Iliad*. As far as I know there is no evidence for the shot put or discus in Africa. Fighting with staves, which is African, and contests with the bow have obvious martial significance. The importance of running is clear from the contest of Hector and Achilles in the *Iliad*. Achilles catches his man because he is "swift of foot". Jumping was a necessary skill for evading sword thrusts. All these contests were well-known activities in Africa.

In Greece the Olympic games, celebrated on the plain of Elis, were a national institution. They were rooted however in prehistoric cults (Drees 1968 : 8). There was originally an ancient cleft, the *Stomium*, associated with the Earth goddess, and a mother goddess cult which involved a divine child Sosipolis who turned into a snake. We consider that the original goddess here was Minona, who appears on Crete as a mother goddess, a witch, and a prophetic figure. The cleft originally served as a passageway for the prophetic snake.



“Ancient boxers wore an armed glove. The purpose was not to protect, but to damage one’s opponent as brutally as possible. Sport was a training for warfare”.

According to Pausanias the foot-race at Olympia originated in a race of the Dactyli who came from Crete to Elis. It appears to have been really a ritual suitors’ race (Drees 1968 : 27). So was the chariot race of Pelops and Oenomaos for the hand of Hippodamia. The column of Oenomaos was originally phallic in nature. (Odysseus won his wife Penelope in such a race).

The foot-race for girls was associated with the marriage of Pelops and Hippodamia, and involved three groups of different ages. The sacred marriage was held three times each year (Drees 1968 : 29). The fact that girls were included in these events shows that they were of African origin. A foot race for boys was also held.

Duels with swords were fought at Olympia, according to Plutarch (*Quaestiones Convivales*, V, 2, p. 675). Drees derives the more arduous events such as wrestling, boxing and *pankration* (boxing, wrestling, pushing, strangling, twisting), from the duels with naked swords. But this is not necessary. All these sports were known in Africa. Violent events were part of the funerary rites. The funeral games of Patroclus in the *Iliad* make that clear.

We consider the Olympic games were originally derived from African fertility ceremonies associated with



marriage, and from funerary rites. Some contests occur in both contexts. All the contests are original, but some reorganisation of events is probable. The winners went home by four-horse chariot.

The word *Olympos*, the name of several mountains in Greece and elsewhere (Lycia, Cyprus, Mysia), likewise the name *Olympia*, are from a Niger-Congo root *lu*, meaning “head, top, summit” + prefix *o-* which occurs with this root in Yoruba and Okpoto. *Olynthus* (with prehellenic suffix *-nthus*) is probably from the same root. The name *Altis*, which refers to a part of the sanctuary, may incorporate the root *ti*, meaning “timber, wood” + prefix *a-*, with influence from the Greek word for “grove”, *alsos*, which however Pausanias (V, 10, 1) claims is equivalent.

Phaeacians (Pha-ia-) I take from N-C root *gia*, meaning “go” with prefix *pa-* “pl. people” (= *ba-*). The Phaeacians were the traders and travellers.

The Roman gladiator sports, which were originally Etruscan, have a similar origin to the more brutal events in the Olympic games, namely funerary rites. But we have already seen that the Etruscans were African in origin.

The Etruscans claimed to have given their games to the Greeks, which scholars have found difficult to explain, due to the lack of stadia in Etruria. But if the Etruscans came from Africa this might indeed be so.

The Nuba of the Sudan (Riefenstahl 1997) practise many sporting events (boxing, wrestling etc), and take them most seriously. They qualify a man for marriage, and increase his prestige. They are not recreational.

The Greeks, it seems, gradually humanised their games. The Romans preferred a spectacle of bloodshed and slaughter. In both cases the original initiatory significance of the games was lost. Ritual became sport on the one hand, barbarity on the other.

See von Geisau (1979: 1360-1361) in DKP, Band 1, for references. We intend to argue :

That Daedalus was not an Athenian. I

That he was not a single person, but the personification of a caste. II

The father of Daedalus was said to be Eupalamos “clever-handed” or Metion “knowledgeable”. These are not real people. He is said to have made the model cow into which Pasiphae entered to have sex with the Minotaur. The Minotaur, as such, did not exist. If Pasiphae had sex with a bull it was not done by means of an artificial cow. The whole story of the Minotaur, as we have seen, was fiction. So too the story of how Daedalus escaped from the labyrinth on wings of wax, but lost his son Icarus on the way. Wings cannot be attached with wax, nor is it possible for man to fly with artificial attachments to the arms. The story of his flight to the Kingdom of Cocalos in Sicily, and of the murder of Minos by Cocalos’ daughters in the bath specially equipped with hot pipes, is also fiction. King Minos himself did not exist. He was not a king at all, as we have seen. The story of the thread, which recurs, in the tale of Ariadne and the labyrinth, and in the tale of the spiral shell, is a folk motif.

## XI

### THE LEGACY OF DAEDALUS



“Daedalus, a legendary artist, craftsman, and inventor of archaic times. Born in Athens. Daedalus was also considered the inventor of carpentry and of such things as the saw, the axe, the plumb-line, the auger and glue”.

HANFMANN

“But the strangest invention he made was the artificial cow in which the queen, Pasiphae, hid herself in order to gratify her passion for the bull”.

GRANT & HAZEL

The only event in Daedalus' life which touches on reality is the story of how Daedalus was jealous of his nephew Talos, and pushed him over a cliff to his death. He hid the body in a bag, but was exposed by the bloodstains and was put on trial before the Areopagus at Athens. He then went into exile in Crete. This is the only incident which associates Daedalus with Athens. In all other respects he is Cretan.

It has been suspected however that the story of his trial for murder by the Areiopagus is an Athenian attempt to claim him as their own. In any case the story of how he threw Talos over a cliff is the folktale of the Prentice Pillar in its Greek form (Rose 1964 : 183).

The earliest mention of Daedalus occurs in Homer where he is a Cretan (Homer, *Iliad*, XVIII, 590). The Attic demos of the Daidalidai came from Crete. A place (of unknown location) on Crete was called Daidala. And a castle in Lycia, on the border of Caria, opposite Rhodes, was called by the same name (Treidler 1979 : 1359 in *DKP*, Band 1).

Let us review the achievements of Daedalus. He is said to have built a dancing place for Ariadne. He is said

also to have built the labyrinth at Knossos. But as we have seen, the labyrinth is really a Yoruba type palace, a royal residence and market. If Daedalus built it, he was a Yoruba architect.

In a variant of the myth, he builds a ship, and invents the first sail, so escaping to Sicily. But the frescoes of Thera show that ships and sails were already invented. The famous sea-kingdom of Crete was based on shipping.

The tale of the death of King Minos in the bath has Daedalus inventing plumbing, with hot water laid on. But the palace of Knossos is known for its elaborate plumbing, with pipes, drainage etc. We are back to our Yoruba architect.

Daedalus is further credited with the carving of wooden images which had movable arms and eyes and could walk. He is credited with the invention of puppets, whose limbs were moved by means of strings. These were the toys of the daughters of Cocalus. But in Egypt puppets have been found in tombs, where they have a magical purpose.

The earliest Greek sculptors whose names are known, Endoios, Skyllis and Dipoinos (Pausanias II, 15, 1) are

said to be descendants or pupils of Daedalus. In fact the tradition of Greek sculpture apparently stems from Crete. We know that some of these early statues were made from wood (Becatti 1968 : 46, pl. 32) but generally only stone and bronze works have survived, few of them earlier than the seventh century.

Bronzeworking in particular is associated with Corinth, a word which goes back to the pre-Greek period. Thus the name Korinthos incorporates the Mediterranean suffix *-nthos*, seen in *plinthos* "brick", *asaminthos* "bath", *laburinthos* "labyrinth", but also for example in Tiryns, Tirynthos. The root of this word is Niger-Congo *ko* "woman" (compare Greek *kore* "girl, statue of a girl").

The wings attached with wax, which melted in the sun, are, I think, a reference to the lost wax process of bronzeworking. The bronze giant Talos, who had a single vein running from his neck to his ankles, is certainly a reference to this process, as Graves points out (Graves 1960 vol. I, 317). Talos guarded the island of Crete by running round it thrice daily, repelling invaders by throwing rocks or grasping them in his red hot embrace. His invention is not attributed to Daedalus but to Hephaestus however.

Graves regards Hephaestus and Daedalus on Crete as identical. On Crete, he tells us, Hephaestus was called Velchanus, introduced at Rome under the name Vulcan.

Hephaestus was a lame blacksmith, the servant of the Greek gods for whom he built "splendid halls and palaces" (Grant & Hazel 1973 : 208). The Dactyls, associated with Mount Ida in Crete (and also Mount Ida near Troy) were also smiths who were said to have taught the Cretans the use of copper and iron. They were variously said to be ten in number – their name means "fingers" – or a hundred, or fifty two, thirty two of whom worked magic spells and twenty who undid them.

Now in Africa the sculptor-smiths are of great importance. Among the Dogon, for example, they occupied an extremely important position in the religious and social life. They were the mediators whose role was nothing less than to weave a web of relations between the world of the living and that of the dead. The smith is the magician who manipulates fire, the sorcerer, but also the keeper of tools and the maker of fetishes (Geoffroy-Schneiter 2000 : 78).

Likewise at Dahomey. "The blacksmiths of Dahomey rank with the weavers as the most respected craftsmen in

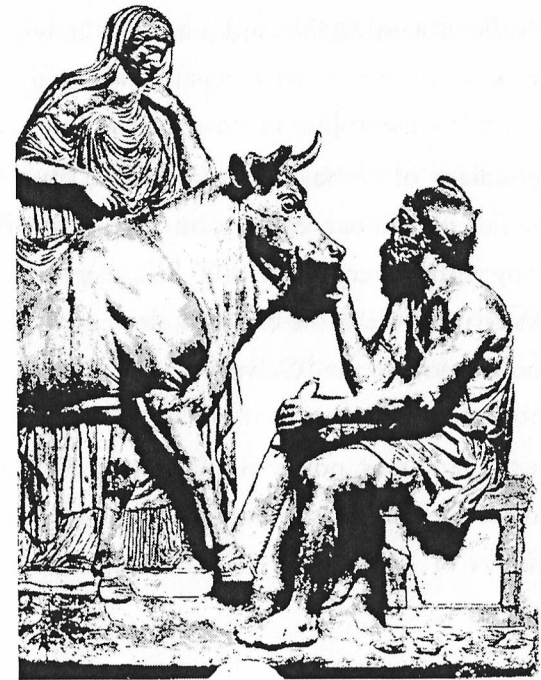
nd. Their craft is passed down in families, and they worship Gu, the god of iron" (Price 1976 : 96).

In our view Daedalus and the Daktyls are Greek mythology's attempt to represent the African caste of sculptor-smiths. They also (like Hephaestus) have responsibility for the building of palaces. Daedalus was the builder of the Cretan palaces. But also of the Sardinian stone towers we know as *nuraghi*. Hence their alternative name *Daedaleia*.

"Daedalus" was also considered to have invented glue, the axe, the saw, the plumbline, the auger, the potter's wheel and the compass. The myth however attributes the last two of these, perhaps also the saw, to Daedalus' nephew Talos.

Daedalus is also credited with the making of a gold honeycomb, which recalls Minoan filigree and granulation.

The roll call of his exploits is clearly unending. As were the achievements of the ancient Cretan craftsmen. Wherever Cretan influence was known, there were the works of Daedalus.



**"Daedalus is shown with the wooden cow he made for Pasiphaë, in which she mated with a bull to give birth to the Minotaur".**



Thus "Daedalus" is also said to have built Apollo's Temple at Cumae, a reservoir on the River Alabon in Sicily, a steam-bath at Selinus, a fortress at Acragas and the terrace of Aphrodite's Temple at Eryx (Grant & Hazel 1973 : 133). We know these works were not Cretan, but Cretan influence in Sicily (and southern Italy?) was a reality.

The Messapians of Hyria, now Oria, came from Crete, after the fall of Minoan civilisation in the late Bronze Age. Along with pottery dated 1400 BC, there are Cretan customs surviving there, the kiss-curl, flower-embroidered robes and the double axe (Graves).

Daedalus, then, was not a single person, but Greek mythology's personification of the sculptors, smiths and builders of Minoan Crete. These craftsmen were African.

He came, in course of time, to represent craftsmen and builders of ancient monuments outside that tradition. So for example the Pyramids at Giza and the Temple of Ptah at Memphis, are attributed to him. Which is historically absurd. But myth is not bound by history.

Myth has a life of its own. It grows out of history, but is not historical. Its function is to make the past intelligible to the present. To the historical Greeks the wonders of the past required an explanation. But not a scientific explanation. Things made required a maker. So they invented the figure of Daedalus the legendary craftsman. And to him they assigned the invention of everything that had ever been made by unknown hands, of every unexplained wonder that came to them from a tradition that they no longer understood.

These things, it was said, were the works of Daedalus. This having been said, further explanation became unnecessary. But where the mythographer's work ends, our work merely begins.

Theories about Cretan art are numerous and prolific (Hood 1978 : ch. 11).

Thus V. Muller sees the art of Crete at its best as “creating a *fairyland* atmosphere”, a world which does not really exist. I

Admittedly there are things in Cretan art which do not exist, eg the griffins on Crete, and the unicorns of Thera. But as we shall see, most of the subjects are real, even if the identification of some of them is sometimes difficult.

Snijder thought that the artists of Crete were *eidetic*, that they had the primitive gift of projecting an image on to the blank surface which they were to decorate, and could then fill it in or draw around it. II

This faculty has been established for certain of the rock artists of Africa. But the tell-tale patterns of dots associated with the productions of eidetics have not been found on Crete (Willcox 1984 : foreward).

Palaeolithic-Mesolithic tendencies have also been detected. III These include the absence of a groundline in landscape, and the use of the flying gallop in the depiction of animals in swift movement. Such tendencies are evident in African rock art, which has a long history.

## XII

### FLORA AND FAUNA



“The Cretan ... presents us with a creature instinct with life and movement, but his lively, instantaneous, impressionistic treatment will not bear too close analysis as to the accuracy of its details.”

STEVENSON SMITH

“Cretan art is infused with a lyrical carelessness and freedom, not only in subject, but also in execution, that makes a very special appeal to modern eyes”.

MacKENZIE

We maintain here that the artwork of Crete is based on a real place, and that that place was Africa. IV

The wall paintings of Thera show date palms and African antelopes. This suggests Africa as the source of the iconography of the frescoes. Is there further supporting evidence?

Minoan art also has in its repertoire representations of monkeys (painted blue), cats, ducks, various water birds and frogs. The monkey, which, it has been suggested, is really one of the green monkeys of the Sudan (Evans 1921 II : 2, 467), is obviously is a jungle animal. The cat is African/Egyptian. The duck and frog are suggestive of Egypt. Elephants' tusks were imported, but there is no evidence for the presence of elephants.

An ivory relief from Palaikastro shows an alighting bird, probably, Higgins says (1967 : 130, pl. 158), of the heron family. The hoopoe, from the hoopoe and partridge frieze of the Caravanserai at Knossos, is presumably African. On a fragmentary fresco from Hagia Triada a pheasant like bird is stalked by a cat. On the "Spring Fresco" from Thera swallows dive through the air. Hawks and owls are less common. Ostrich eggs, and of course the ostrich

is African, have been found on Crete. Even today the Bushmen use ostrich eggs as water containers. Doves however had a religious significance, and are found on cult objects.

Other wild animals shown include the lion, (a lion cub features on a seal), leopard and deer, gazelle and ibex. Here we are in the African savannah. Bulls and goats might be regarded as domestic animals, but the art shows them being attacked by feline predators. We know now that before 2000 BC large herds of cattle roamed what is now the Sahara, and that water was plentiful.

We should make mention here of the animal head rhyta, which are formed to represent the head of the animal, usually the bull. Horns were important in Africa as a symbol of fertility. Lions' and leopards' heads also occur in this genre. If we may judge from modern African practice (Willett 1993 : 205), these rhyta were filled with magical substances.

A seal from Tiryns, which may be of Minoan manufacture, shows a procession of men wearing lionskins, including the head of the animal. Another such procession features persons wearing the head of an animal which has been variously identified as a hippopotamus or a donkey.

Dogs are prominent and were used for boar hunting. On late seals they are shown scratching fleas. Sheep and goats were both domesticated by this time, as were cattle. The ass, the standard pack animal, appears as a miniature clay figure carrying water jars (Evans 1928 I : 1, 157, pl. 157). And, on a seal impression from the Little Palace at Knossos, is a thoroughbred horse, introduced c1450, says Evans (1928 II : 1, 242) for the purpose of drawing chariots. Compare Glotz (1952 : 193f).

Snakes, which had a special religious significance in fertility ceremonies, were kept in special "snake tubes", and must be regarded as semidomesticated. Scorpions seen on seals may be species native to Crete.

The famous gold bee pendant from Mallia should also be mentioned here. Once thought to represent wasps, it clearly incorporates a honeycomb. Like much of Cretan art, it is a masterpiece in miniature. The artists excelled in painstaking and difficult techniques such as granulation, the attachment of grains of gold to a gold object. In Senegal in Africa granulation and filigree (attachment of gold wire), known also on Minoan Crete, have a long and distinguished history.

The problems regarding identification are significant (Bloedow & Björk 1989). We know that even today, Yoruba artists aim at *jijora* (Willett 1993 : 212), a moderate resemblance to the subject. It should not be too lifelike, nor yet so stylised as to be unrecognisable. This is why Minoan objects are not fully accurate representations, why the monkey is blue, why the rising bird is also an unnatural blue, for example. As Hood (1978 : 235), says "Cretan animals and birds, stylised as they are and drawn with scant regard for accuracy, tend to look more alive, and therefore more real, than Egyptian ones".

They follow an ideal expressed by the Chinese painter, Tung Chi Chang : "Flowers and fruit should move in the wind, they should be covered with dew. The birds should fly and the animals should run". For they are living beings.

The butterfly, as a symbol of the soul, is prominent, especially in tomb jewellery. Sometimes these have human eyes (Evans 1928 II, 2 : 789, pl. 516).

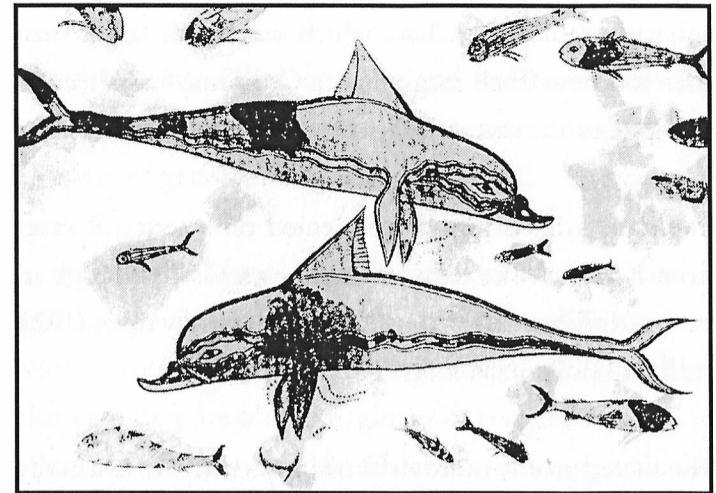
The same applies to the dolphins of the Queen's megaron at Knossos. They are obviously dolphins, but look a little closer at the unanatomical line down the side, and at the eye, which resembles that of a human. One

of the sealstones shows a man in a boat menaced by a hippopotamos. Presumably a scene from the Nile.

The most famous Cretan object is the Octopus Pot from Palaikastro, which shows the creature moving sinuously against a background of marine life. On the ewer in Marseilles nautili appear in a similar environment. The rhyton from Zakro is adorned with starfish and sea snails, a subject which recurs elsewhere (Evans 1930 III : 27, pl. 14). Flying fish, goldfish and other fish have been identified. Not to mention a crab.

Schmalenbach (1948 : 12f) says of these representations "Es ist, als entstünden sie vor unsern Augen durch die sphärisch ausgreifenden Bewegungen der Seetiere. Sie scheinen selbst zu leben, zu atmen, sich zu bewegen. Es ist ein genießerisches Schauspiel entfesselter Seenatur". The Cretans were very close to the sea and to nature.

Shells too were a favourite subject. Some may have been used as a medium of exchange (cowries) as in Africa, some had religious connotations. Ritual stone vessels were made in the form of shells (Evans 1928 II, 2 : 821 pl. 537).



**"Dolphins were thought to be men transformed into mammals. This belief is based on ancient ideas regarding the transmigration of souls from persons into beasts and plants".**



These aquatic references may be due, not only to the fact that Crete was an island, and was surrounded by the sea, but to the African origins of the Cretans. Before 2000 BC Africa between the Niger and the Nile had numerous lakes and rivers. The Sahara had not yet aridified. The original home of the Minoans may have been an African aquaculture near L. Chad, which was much larger then than it is now. Their migration to Crete may have been in response to the increasingly dry conditions in Africa.

The date palm is found represented on a series of vases from Knossos. The date palm grew on Crete, though in the north Evans remarks that the dates hardly ripen (1928 II, 2 : 493). Perhaps it fared better on Thera.

The sacred tree is more difficult to identify. It is usually shown with a person shaking it. The Pillar cult presumably derives ultimately from tree worship.

Papyrus was a preferred form of decoration. One associates it with the Nile, but in fact it is plentiful in swamps throughout Africa. The papyrus thickets were the haunt of Bouto, one of whose forms was the snake.

The "sacral ivy" to which Evans attributes a religious significance, perhaps an association with the underworld,

is ubiquitous. Olive sprays may be naturalistic, or reduced to a single bloom. The Madonna lily appears both as a decorative motif and as a sacred flower, held by the goddess and her votaries. As a decorative motive it is often combined with the upper part of the papyrus, the *waz* symbol. This represents the snake.

The rose, water lillies, crocuses and violets are depicted with greater or less similitude. Minoan art also cultivates a variety of grasses, particularly the vetch.

In general the Minoan treatment of plants, like that of animals is inexact. "Cretan flowers, imbued as they are with movement, tend to look extraordinarily lifelike, although they are often imaginary or conventionalised to a point where they defy identification with any particular species" (Hood 1978 : 235).

Since many of the motifs had a symbolic or religious meaning, the reasons for this are assumed sometimes to be due to magic.

On sealstones however the motivation may be practical. Designs were constantly changed to avoid false identification.

Some of the plants no longer grow on Crete or Thera. This is due to climate change and the general deforestation of the Mediterranean countries, which now no longer attract rain.

The flora of ancient Crete as shown in its art, like the fauna, are not exclusively drawn from the repertoire of creatures that existed on Crete. Many find their original home and their original significance in Africa, from which the Minoans originally came. Animals on the island were limited to those which could be transported by boat. Livestock, dogs, even horses could be brought in by ship. Larger animals such as the elephant, desirable for its tusks, giraffe and hippopotamus could not.

In general the more abstract motifs used in wall and pottery decoration are derived from plants and animals of Africa. Thus painted triangles represent the broken calabash (Courtney-Clarke 1990 : 43), the much discussed Minoan spiral design represents the male and female python (Courtney-Clarke 1990 : 168). The African painted decoration was applied by women, and many of the motifs embody potent female symbols.

In West Africa women painted their mud dwellings after the harvest in vivid primary colours like those of Minoan

Camare Ware. The colours were vegetable and organic dyes applied in soil and urine. No doubt the pot painters of Crete were women also.

NOTE : The use of blue on human hair in the Thera frescoes has Egyptian analogues, and may be intended to indicate royalty or divinity. One thinks of the Egyptian Blue Crown in this connection. Egyptian art also has blue baboons ; compare the blue monkeys of Thera.

### XIII

#### THE GOLD OF MYCENAE



**“Gold was the same colour as the sun and did not corrode. Like the sun therefore it was considered a guarantee of never-ending renewal and the material from which the flesh of the gods was made.”**

**SEIDEL & SCHULZ**

**“There are in all five tombs, in the smallest of which I found yesterday the bones of a man and a woman covered by at *least* five kilograms of jewels of pure gold, with the most wonderful archaic, impressed ornaments ; even the smallest leaf is covered with them”.**

**SCHLIEMANN**

Ancient Mycenae “rich in gold” was built on a hill in the Greek Peloponnese. The Lion Gate afforded entry through a fortification perimeter wall of massive stone blocks to the Palace Complex within. To the right of this gateway was Grave Circle A, which contained the Shaft Graves.

The general layout of Mycenae recalls that of African tribal towns. And the plan of Grave Circle A has striking affinities with the plan of Gbande (Fraser 1962: Ill. 55), a fortified town in northern Liberia, West Africa. The roughly contemporary grave circles at Kerma are also relevant.

While digging the Shaft Graves at Mycenae in 1876, Heinrich Schliemann uncovered five bodies in what is known as Circle A. The faces of these figures were covered by masks of gold plate executed in the *repoussé* technique (Demargne 1964 : 186-191). At least one appeared to have been mummified.

From the individualised features and lack of idealisation the excavator concluded that the masks were likenesses of the deceased. But who were they ? And where did they come from ?

Theories proposed include the following :

Byzantine images of Christ (Curtius). I But the graves are dated to the sixteenth century BC. Five corpses of Christ over a thousand years before his birth ?

The masks are those of King Agamemnon and his family (Schliemann). II One of the masks, which displayed a long, aquiline nose, high forehead and thin lips was identified by Schliemann as the Homeric hero Agamemnon. But the Siege of Troy which was lead by Agamemnon was traditionally dated by the Greeks c 1180 BC. This date is confirmed to some extent by the archaeological evidence (Wace & Stubbings 1963: 377-379). In any case the War has affinities with the tradition of Greek, Anatolian and Mesopotamian epic poetry, which is not a reliable source of historical information.

A recent attempt by Michael Wood to move the Trojan War to various excavation levels at Hissarlik and destructions of the city of Troy by fire and sword (Wood 1985: 16), hardly inspires confidence. In fact the historicity of the War *per se* is very much open to doubt. It has obvious African elements.



**“Mycenae is guarded by the Lion Gate, which incorporates a relieving triangle of Egyptian type. Egyptian kings were seen as “lions”. The column is Cretan however”.**

The masks are those of the Ruling Family at Mycenae in the sixteenth century BC. III This is usually combined with the view that they were Indo-Europeans or early "Greeks". Evidence for this latter position includes the presence of Minyan Ware (supposedly), and megaron-type buildings at Mycenae.

More recently the discovery of a Linear B inscription on stone at Olympia, assigned to the seventeenth century BC, has added some credence to the argument (Renfrew 1997 : 122) for a Greek presence in the Peloponnese at an early date. For we know that Linear B is associated with an early form of Greek. However the Linear A and B scripts are now known to have developed from the Egyptian practice of "syllabische Schreibung", an application of hieroglyphic and hieratic type scripts to write foreign languages.

The grave goods of the Shaft Graves, however, are a farrago of objects from all over the ancient world (Vermeule 1972: 82-106). Gold death masks are not, as far as we know, an Indo-European invention. Nor is intramural burial (as seen at Mycenae at this time) an Indo-European practice (Vermeule 1964 : 79).

The view that Mycenae was occupied by Indo-Europeans at this time is just an assumption, as is the suggestion that the facial types represented by the masks are necessarily Indo-European.

Their alleged "realism" is due to the fact that they were modelled on the faces of the dead according to Demargne (1964 : 184). In fact the metal must have been hammered over a mould, probably of wood, possibly of terra cotta. So the faces are unlikely to be accurate likenesses, despite their vivid, macabre quality.

Apart from one, which has a round, bulbous face with protruding eyes, however, the features of the masks are similar in their essentials to those of the "Agamemnon", long nose, beard, moustache and thick eyebrows that sometimes meet above the nose. This may not be due to family resemblance so much as to reduction to a type; not an idealised type however. The beards may be false, like those of the Egyptian kings.

Minoans from Crete. IV Demargne (1964 : 183-185) argues that as far as consistent prototypes for the associated grave goods can be found the prototypes are generally Cretan. We are told, in fact, that the Aegean region was controlled in prehistoric times by the navy of Minoan



Crete (Thucydides I, 4). Crete was the "Mittelpunkt der mediterranen Welt" (Schmalenbach 1948 : 11).

Evans regarded the Mycenaeans as a branch of the Minoans. Further, the modern savant Marinatos (1976 p.19) states : "Das Minoische kreuzt sich jetzt mit dem Mykenischen, und die Trennung ist manchmal schwer". He adds that Cyprus, Miletus and places in the West such as the Lipari islands, show a mixed Minoan-Mycenaean culture. What the exact relationship was is unclear.

The Minoans however are generally depicted as beardless and clean shaven. So the features of the Mycenaean masks can hardly have a Minoan anatomical model unless their kings wore false beards. It is noteworthy nevertheless that partial gold masks, designed to cover the eyes of the dead, have been found in early graves at Mochlos (Higgins : 1967 : 44, pl. 18). This is the nearest local parallel and precedent. The Vapheio cups, identified as Minoan by their excavator Tsountas, and also, on stylistic grounds, by Matz (1962 : 129), are in a similar *repoussé* technique. And the Minoans were expert at working gold plate.

The masks and graves are those of pirate chiefs. V This plausible. Piracy was rife at the time. To quote Thucydides (I, 5):

"For in these early times, as communication by sea became easier, so piracy became a common profession both among the Hellenes and among the barbarians who lived on the coast and in the islands. The leading pirates were powerful men, acting both out of self-interest and in order to support the weak among their own people. They would descend upon cities which were unprotected by walls and indeed consisted only of scattered settlements; and by plundering such places they would gain most of their livelihood. At this time such a profession, so far from being regarded as disgraceful, was considered quite honourable".

Mycenae was well placed as a base from which to raid shipping on the way to Italy, Sicily, Corfu, etc, and to plunder wrecks. Perhaps the masks are those of pirate chiefs, who would not necessarily share the race or nationality of their followers. Brigands, outlaws, escaped slaves, disgraced soldiers and human jetsam of all kinds gathered together to pursue the practice of piracy. The kingdom of Mycenae may have been a kingdom of corsairs. Their leaders might have come from any nation in the vicinity.

The Philistines are shown as bearded on a tile from Medinet Habu (Kahane 1969 : 66). So too the Syrians. The features of the masks match the anatomy of the Levant. VI

Egyptians. Taylour (1964 : 224, plate 16) sees Egyptian influence here. VII Gilding of moulded coffins is known in Egypt from the early New Kingdom (Leca 1979 : 192). This gives us a contemporary parallel. We know that sheet gold was already worked by embossing in the Archaic Period (Emery 1961 : 228).

Gold was associated with immortality. So the use of gold masks may indicate a desire to preserve the features for rebirth, which is a particularly Egyptian concept. The golden faces of the dead were designed to meet the golden rays of the Sun god. Instance the gold mask of Tutankhamun, which is much later in date than the masks from Mycenae, but is based on Middle Kingdom prototypes which have survived only in fragments. The gold masks of Mycenae may be the only exemplars of Middle Kingdom Egyptian practice. Gold was applied to the pyramids and was symbolic of the Sun god in the Old Kingdom.

Egyptian nobles and royalty shaved their heads and beard. However it must be noted that the heads of Egyptian kings were not shaved before mummification. Spencer (1982 : 39) informs us, regarding a fifth Dynasty mummy from Saqqara, that "A moustache was painted on the upper lip and a false beard of linen was attached to the chin". This provides an Egyptian parallel for the hairstyle of the Mycenaean gold death masks.

Both the Lion Gate and the Treasury of Atreus make use of a device known as the relieving triangle, which is designed to take the weight off the lintel, when massive stone structures are built above it. This device also occurs in the Great Pyramid.

It is not a known feature of Indo-European architecture, and suggests the presence of Egyptian builders. Egyptian builders were practised in the raising of massive stone blocks by means of dirt ramps. The Hyksos introduced the shaduf to Egypt, which provided a prototype for the crane. Was the crane removed through the triangle?

Perhaps a definitive answer to our original question is not possible. What we can say is that Egyptians were present at Mycenae when the burials were made in the shaft graves. Minoans were probably present at Mycenae. Most of the

grave goods were Minoan. There appears to have been at least a Negroid component on Minoan Crete, and one of the burials in the shaft graves was remarkably tall -a full six feet, says Vermeule (1972 : 88)-, but Negroes, like the Minoans, are not bearded. Further bearded gold masks made in the lost wax technique (see the eyes) have been found in Africa (Adandé et alii eds. 1951 : pl. 49, pls. 54 – 58) in the Ashanti royal treasure and on the Ivory Coast. In Africa, too, beards were a sign of kingship. The fact that the beard allegedly continues to grow after death may be relevant.

Nevertheless, we think it unlikely that foreigners of any extraction would have adopted Egyptian burial customs. We think, and it is only our opinion, that the family buried in the Shaft Graves was Egyptian, perhaps a noble Egyptian family sent into exile. Or were they Hyksos ?

## XIV

### HOMER THE MYTH

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**“The Greeks called their first great poet Homer and differed among themselves as to just when he lived ; knowing little more of him today than they did then, we place him in the ninth or eighth century B. C., several hundred years after Troy fell.”**

**SCHERER**

**“Les poèmes homériques sont l’aboutissement d’un long développement de poésie orale, oeuvre d’une corporation d’aèdes, groupés peutêtre par famille, comme celle des ‘Ομηρίδαι à Chios, qui prétendaient descendre d’ Homère”.**

**MAZON**

Who was Homer? The following suggestions have been made.

A blind poet from Chios. I

Various bards whose names have been forgotten. II

The author of the Iliad and Odyssey. III

The Homeric corpus includes the Iliad, the Odyssey, but also the Shield of Achilles and Homeric Hymns. The Iliou Persis and works from the Epic Cycle, so called, are not generally regarded as Homeric. About all that can be said about Homer's compositions for certain is that they post-date the Bronze Age, and the Trojan War, if indeed there was an historical Trojan War, and precede the seventh century.

Cantarella (1962 : 65) comments that dates for Homer range from the period of the traditional capture of Troy (1184 BC) to 60, 100, 140, even 400 years after the events described. Herodotus (II, 53) tells us that Homer and Hesiod lived about 400 years before his own time, ie about 850 BC. The reason for the Trojan War, we are told, was the abduction by the Trojan, Paris, son of Priam, of Helen, the beautiful wife of King Agamemnon of Sparta.

A similar motivation for conflict is used by Herodotus in his Histories. Which casts doubt on the reliability of both accounts.

The Cypria fills us in on the background to this war. "There was a time when the countless tribes of men, though wide-dispersed, oppressed the surface of the deep-bosomed earth, and Zeus saw it and had pity and in his wise heart resolved to relieve the all-nurturing earth of men by causing the great struggle of the Ilian war, that the load of death might empty the world." The mythological, almost biblical, overtones of this prelude, do not inspire historical confidence.

Of Homer himself nothing is known for certain (Baldry 1959). As Cantarella (1962 : 65) says, "I diffusi e numerosi particolari biografici derivano da una elaborazione fantiosa, a carattere popolare, della leggenda che ben presto si formò intorno ad Omero". His life is an elaborate fiction.

Homer's name perhaps derives from the Greek article *ho* + the root *mer* as seen in *meropon anthropon*. What *meropon* means is not known, perhaps "human" (compare Niger-Congo *ma, me* "town, people, tribe"). Some authorities took Homer's name to mean "hostage" (Murray 1956 : 5). Murray (page 4) regards the personalities of the epic

authors as “utterly beyond our reach”. They are “fantastic or mythical”. They speak a language “full of forgotten meaning and past states of society”. The real bards of early Greece were all “nameless and impersonal”.

Poets were typically regarded as blind, and the blind portraits of Homer are fictitious “poet” images. The idea may have been inspired by the passage in the Hymn to Apollo.

“A blind man, and he dwells in rocky Chios : his songs are the best for all time to come.”

The various birthplaces attributed to Homer are scattered all over the Mediterranean : Smyrna, Chios, Colophon, Salamis, Ios, Argos, Athens (but also Rhodes and Pylos, in place of Ios, and Ithaca in place of Salamis). This suggests, if anything, that “he” was several different persons.

Even if we assign only the Iliad and Odyssey to Homer, the tone and subject matter of these two compositions is so different that one scholar (Samuel Butler) maintained that the Odyssey was written by a woman.



**“The portraits of Homer are based on an ideal type of the blind seer or bard with second sight. This bust is a Roman copy of a Hellenistic concept of the poet”.**



Recent analysis by Milman Parry (Parry 1971) and his followers supports the view that “Homer” was orally composed and recomposed by a number of different bards. It has all the hallmarks to show that it is not a written document : formulae, stock epithets, redundancy and repetition, digressions, Chinese box structure and so on.

M. Murko (cited by Mazon 1959 : 121) found that the same oral bard never sings exactly the same song twice, nor does he try to. The *guzlar* of the Balkans travels from village to village. In a month he may recite 90 songs of over 80,000 verses. A tradition of shorter oral poetry still survives on Crete.

Webster (1964) reports at some length on work by Gordon (AJA 56, 1952), which compares analagous formulae in Ugaritic, Hittite, Assyrian and Egyptian, with those of Greek epic. Gordon cites expressions announcing the arrival of dawn in the epic of Gilgamesh, and relates them to Homer’s “When rosy-fingered dawn appeared...”. The repetition of numbers is also significant. Epic themes such as sieges and banquets also have a very long history.

The Homeric tradition was preserved by a *gens* or caste of bards at Chios (Monro 1884 : xiv f.), one of the places

associated traditionally with Homer. Other such castes of hereditary bards existed at Athens (the Eumolpidae) and at Sparta (the Talthybiadae). In historical times *rhapsodes* recited his poems, holding a staff. But the poems appear to have previously been sung to the lyre.

The expression used to describe Homeric poetry was “stitched words” *rhapton epeon*. I suggest Homeric (*w*)*epos* is from N-C *wel/ye* “speak”, with regular loss of the digamma *w*. The *rhapton* may be from N-C *lua* “to weave, plait”. This puts Homeric epic in an African context, as far as its technical vocabulary is concerned.

Descriptions of weaving occur frequently in epic, eg the famous tapestry woven by Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, which she wove by day and unpicked by night, to avoid marrying any of the suitors. From mythology we have the tapestry of Procne and Philomela, which conveys a story to the recipient.

Herodotus, described as *homerikōtatos* “most Homeric” used a style of composition known as *lexis eiromenē* “speech strung like beads”. Some of his procedures, eg use of formulae, belong to the oral style. His dialect is mixed, locally and chronologically.

In Africa the oral style of composition was well developed, usually as entertainment in the courts of kings. Inspiration involved contacting spirits of the dead (Muses?). And various mnemonic techniques were employed, including the use of the rhapsode's "memory" staff and beads.

Roberts & Roberts ( 1996 : 33) : "If Luba have a rich vocabulary to express concepts of memory, they also possess a proliferation of visual forms to encode and stimulate mnemonic processes. These include beaded necklaces and headdresses ; wooden memory boards, thrones, figures and staffs : and sceptres, axes, adzes, spears, and other objects incorporating iron and/or copper."

The Greek reference to beads and staffs may represent this tradition, but in a reduced and abased form. Beads provided a thematic mnemonic, a basis for improvisation.

We are also told that "Mbudy historians were rigorously trained 'men of memory', who could recite genealogies, king lists and all of the episodes in the founding charter of kingship. They travelled with kings...and spread propaganda" (Roberts & Roberts 1996 : 37).

"The names, titles, and duties of all the court dignitaries; sacred loci in the landscape where particular named spirits

reside ; countless proverbs, maxims and songs, and even the precise location and contents of the royal treasures" were part of their repertoire (Roberts in Stepan 2001 : 38). All of which sounds very like the activities of Homeric bards, who also had a remarkable memory for genealogies and performed at court. Catalogues of ships, women etc., and proverbs and maxims are a feature of the epic style.

The Luba device of the memory board, or *lukasa* triggered remembrance of "deeds and exploits, qualities and physical appearance"(Ibid.). In Homer these qualities were largely conventional, and not always appropriate to the situation. This is the stuff of which epic is made however.

Homeric epic retains words from a Niger-Congo tradition, eg *wanax*, "sacred king", *en nuktos amolgoi* "in the (depth) of night". The second of these expressions, which has caused much puzzlement, is from Niger-Congo *mal* "flaming, glistening", as can be seen from *Iliad* XX, 27-28, with its reference to *augai* "bright lights" and *polloisi met' astrasi* "among many stars". The reference is not to the darkness of night, but to the blazing firmament. Homeric *kal/ke* is a Niger-Congo particle, and Greek *ma/me*, found also in Homer, is the Niger-Congo modal negative.

So too the augment (Stapleton 1903 : 151 Kongo & Ngala), which has a similar tense distribution in African languages (Torrend 1891 : 237) and in Greek, appears sporadically in Homeric Greek. Torrend derives it from *ya* “go”. The old Niger-Congo verb *ba* “come” turns up in Homer as *(e)ba*, both with and without the augment.

In all probability, there was once a Niger-Congo epic corresponding to Homer’s *Iliad*, just as the text of Matthew’s *Gospel* was preceded by an Aramaic version which has not survived.

The Homeric heroes drive horse-drawn chariots. These seem, strangely out of place in Greece, which is steeply mountainous. But we know that the horse was introduced into Africa in the second millennium BC. The Chariot Routes, also in Africa, link the West with the coast and Egypt. They take their name from the depictions of chariots etched onto the rocks, drawn by horses with their legs extended in the flying gallop.

The Homeric heroes are fitted with figure of eight shields, which are made of ox-hide, like the shields of Zulu warriors (compare Baumann & Westermann 242, fig. 184). The figure of eight shield also occurs in the repertoire of Vai syllabic signs. It is the symbol of the Libyan goddess Neith. It is at home in Africa.

And they are armed with long throwing spears, the *dolichoskion egkos*, again like those of the Zulu. One can almost see the African shadows cast by these weapons. I derive Achaioi from N-C root *gan* “arrow, spear”. It occurs with prefix *a-* in Tshi and Ga which has the form *ga-i*, also in Aro (Igbo) *a-ga* etc.

Danaoi, the Homeric word for “Greeks” (?) may be from *la/da* “sword”, as seen in Edo *a-da* “sword”, Igbo *u-da* “sword” etc. The prefix is optional on this word.

Apollo sends arrows, representing plague, down upon the Greek camp, in *Iliad* I. Invisible “arrows of sickness” are also used to represent disease in Africa (Garlake 2002 : 48), where the concept has a context and an explanation, the belief in “malign trancers”.

Before going into battle, the heroes take time to recite their genealogies and boast of their ancestors. There is an air of unreality about all of this. It belongs to another place (Africa) and another time.

The picture given by Homer of the Bronze Age is idealised. Eg the heroes dine exclusively on roast ox and pork, and have superhuman strength. The vast herds of wild

cattle required for this lifestyle certainly never existed in Greece. Greece is not cattle country. They may however have roamed the African savannah, perhaps prior to the aridification of the Sahara c 2500 BC. Superhuman strength enabling people to lift massive stones "such as ten men could not lift" is a figment of the poet's imagination however. (Basque athletes can lift 400 lb stones.)

But the Homeric epic is also bowdlerised, as pointed out by Gilbert Murray (1934), probably during the Pisistratid recension. And most of the things bowdlerised are African.

Thus Achilles drags Hector behind his chariot in the Iliad. Hector in Homer's version of this incident is already dead. But in other surviving versions, eg that of Sophocles (Ajax 1031) and Euripides (Andromache 399), Hector is dragged alive behind the chariot. This surely is the original story. But it is too cruel for an historical Greek audience. Other cruelties exorcised from the text include decapitation (including fixing of the head onto a post "like an African chief"), stripping of the dead, and torture (Murray 1934 : 128 f.).

Apart from the sacrifice of Trojan prisoners at the funeral of Patroclus, human sacrifice is not mentioned, nor is

cannibalism (story of Lycaon and Pelops), or mutilation (found in Hesiod). Achilles does say however in Book XXII to Hector "I only wish that I could summon up the appetite to carve and eat you raw" (Murray 1934 : 131).

The use of poisoned arrows (Murray 1934 : 129-130), too has been suppressed in the Iliad, but does receive mention in the Odyssey. Poisoned arrows have a long history in Africa.

As for the "long-haired Achaeans", Gilbert Murray, following Robertson Smith (Murray 1934 : 132-133), thinks that they had taken a vow not to cut, comb or wash the hair while on the war-path. In other words they were under a taboo (Beckwith & Fisher 1999 : II, 151).

If we look at the names of the Homeric heroes, some of them appear to have Niger-Congo etymologies : Aias from N-C root *gia*, "to go, accompany"; Achilles from N-C root *gíl*, "to be angry, to be in a rage" (the Iliad is about the wrath of Achilles), both with prefix *a-* ; Odysseus from root *lu/du* "head" (there is a byform Olusseus), with prefix *o-* in Yoruba and Okpoto. Odysseus was *polutropos*, "wily".

Webster (1964) points out that many personal names given to the Trojans in Homer occur on the Linear B tablets. He infers that the Trojan War originated in Greece. But this does not follow. Not if we assume that Africans, with African names, were present in Greece. Schachermeyr (1929 : 254) : "In der Sage trägt ein große Zahl von Heroen vorgriechische und somit wohl ägäische Namen".

Likewise with placenames : Pylos from root *pu* , "bush, field ", compare Gbe *a-pulu* "bush"; Ithaca from root *ta* "stone", compare Nupe *i-ta-ku* "stone", Konyagi *i-ta-ka* "stone".

Finally there is the question of the Divine machinery. The gods not only observe the action, and take an interest in the human combatants. They actually participate. Apollo aids Hector, giving him "strength and speed of foot" when he is pursued by Achilles. But ultimately deserts him.

Athena disguises herself as Deiphobus, Hector's brother, in order to deceive him, and to persuade him to fight Achilles. Hector is "the slave of the god". But this expression comes from Africa. Griaule & Dieterlen (1951 : 22, Fig. 41) describe the *ankh* sign as meaning "captif de Dieu". The same expression refers in Linear B to slaves.

Aphrodite goes into battle and is wounded by a mortal. This is regarded as comic relief.

The gods, it seems, can change their shape. Some of them could assume animal form. This is most clear in the case of Hera "the ox-eyed" and Athena "the owl-eyed". A red figure cup of the 5<sup>th</sup> century shows an armed Athena as an owl (Parker 1995 : 30). In other words the heroes are aided and abetted in battle by their Totemic Ancestors, who appear in animal guise. The comings and goings of the gods, their appearances and disappearances, can be explained in terms of the external soul, which can enter the bodies of men and animals. The Egyptian dead, likewise, could assume animal form by reciting incantations.

In the *Odyssey* I, 22 f. we read "But Poseidon was now gone to visit the far Aithiopians, Aithiopians, most distant of men, who live divided, some at the setting of Hyperion, some at his rising, to receive a hecatomb of bulls and rams". In other words he had returned to his original home, where cattle were abundant.

Totemism, too, comes from Africa. But it was alien to the historical Greeks, who reduced these Totemic Ancestors to people living in the sky, and abolished their animal features.



Problems of topography in the *Iliad* include the “dykes” and ditches at Troy (Hissarlik): *teichos*, *gephura*, *potamou gephura* (Wilkins 2005 : 77 – 78 etc); and the extensive Trojan plain, with space for the 3000 horses of Erichthonios. The pursuit of Hector around the city by Achilles is also difficult to explain if we accept that Troy is Hissarlik.

I do not subscribe to Wilkins’ attempt to transfer Troy to England and Mycenae to France, however. *Ignotum per ignotius*. His evidence from placenames, if anything, indicates a very early African presence in remote places. The Picts of Britain were probably African (“tattooed, painted”).

The Homeric descriptions of the sea as “grey, black, wine-dark, salty, misty, whitening, brilliant, turbulent, dangerous and immense” (seas as “high as mountains”), would be more appropriate to the Atlantic (the Mediterranean is blue) ; also the references to the ebb and flow of tides, (*apsoroos*). The “measureless rains” and “thick mists” are African.

Much of Homeric epic, we think, comes originally out of Africa. The dykes would be at home in Egypt, as would

the plains suitable for great herds of horses. The huge, dark seas may refer to the Atlantic off the coast of west Africa. The “measureless rains” belong to the tropics. The “pursuit of Hector” took place on the African savannah.

But the poem has been adapted and modernised along the way. It originally incorporated features which were incomprehensible to the Greeks. These were watered down, reinterpreted and edited, to suit a Greek audience. But archaisms and anachronisms remain.

Homer even refers, in a figure of speech, to a razor in *Iliad* X, 173. The Minoans, Egyptians and Philistines (?) all shaved their beards. But not the Mycenaeans or early Greeks. So what are we to make of this?

Homeric epic, as Chadwick pointed out in his “Homère le menteur” in *Diogène* (1972), is not an accurate description of Mycenaean society in any shape or form. The Linear B decipherment has made that clear. See Lorimer’s (1950) *Homer and the Monuments* for archaeological evidence from various periods down to the Geometric.

We should not conclude, in the face of the inconsistencies and illogicalities of the epic tradition, that Homer was literally blind. Even though blind bards were believed to

have second sight. The problems associated with Homeric poetry are due to a long, oral tradition, that has travelled both in time and in space, and been through changes of language and dialect along the way. It began, we think, with the *griots* of Africa. The original language was African, not Greek, as we can see from the metre and from African substrate words.

Homer is Greek mythology's attempt to represent the ancient caste of bards, which originated in Africa. As usual, Greek mythology makes things it does not fully understand intelligible by converting them to a single human personage. Homer belongs to mythology. He never really existed. His corpus of writings is due to many different bards improvising within an oral tradition of great antiquity. And that tradition was originally African.

Homeric society, in so far as it existed at all, was a composite society. Its wars and adventures are not real, in the historical sense, but the product of the collective imagination of the caste of bards working on memories of the past, elaborating them, reshaping them and adapting them to the needs of the present. The places where these events are said to have occurred are largely drawn from the Greek Bronze Age, which was not really Greek but Pelasgian. Africans were prominent in the Aegean at that time, along with Indo-Europeans.

The characters described in Greek epic may once have existed, either in Greece or in Africa, as real characters, but their exploits are a strange mixture of the true, the false and the fabulous. Exploits are transferred from one personage to another, people are duplicated and conflated to create an exciting narrative and an ideal picture of a past that is larger than life.

"We Muses know how to tell many falsehoods that resemble that which is true. But we also know, when we wish, to proclaim the truth." (Hesiod *Theogony* 27-28).

This is how Hesiod the epic poet describes his craft. But how are we to know the difference between Hesiod's truth and Hesiod's falsehood? What, after all, is truth? What is falsehood? And does it really matter to an epic poet?

NOTE: Lukasa memory boards have African speaking heads. Compare p. 258, WOODEN TABLET.

In Homer's *Iliad* Lemnos is a provisioning post connected with the slave trade. The background to the absence of men when Jason and the Argonauts arrived is also distasteful. The Lemnian men, we are told, had quarrelled with their wives, complaining that the women were cursed by Aphrodite, and stank. They took Thracian concubines to replace them. The Lemnian women responded by murdering all their menfolk. One wonders just what was going on on the island of Lemnos.

Philostratus, writing in the second and third centuries AD, records that all fires were extinguished in the island for nine days, in honour of the chthonic deities. New fire was brought by ship from Delos. Then life started up again. He explicitly connects this ritual with the ancient crime committed by the women of Lemnos.

Graves (1960 : 2, 226, note) however states that the Lemnian massacre should be explained in terms of the social structure of certain Libyan tribes which practised gynocracy, "supported by armed priestesses". In fact Herodotus (IV, 180) mentions Libyan Ausean maidens fighting with stones and clubs in honour of Athena, and a beautiful virgin dressed in armour, led around a lake in a chariot. The name Athena, Athana recalls the Niger-Congo root *ta* "war", with a Niger-Congo prefix *a-* and a Niger-Congo demonstrative suffix *-na*.

## XV

### LEMNIAN DEEDS



**"According to Greek mythology, when the Argonauts landed at Lemnos, they found it only inhabited by women, who had murdered their husbands".**

**(after) APOLLONIUS RHODIUS**

**"Thus it seemed good to the Pelasgians to kill all the sons of the Attic women ; which they did accordingly, and at the same time slew likewise their mothers".**

**HERODOTUS**

Graves thinks that the Lemnian women did not really murder their men, but that the idea of warrior women suggested the story to the mythographers. But these tales of man-slaying are generic. They do not belong to specific historical events.

One is reminded in this connection of the Amazons, the warrior women of Greek mythology “always situated on the borders of the known world”.

Forsdyke summarises what is known about them : (Everyman Enc. I, 1958) :

“Amazons (Gk ‘breastless’), legendary race of female warriors said to have come from beyond the Caucasus and settled in Asia Minor. They were governed by a queen, and according to some authorities the female children had their right breasts cut off in order to facilitate their use of the bow. Their male children were killed or banished...”

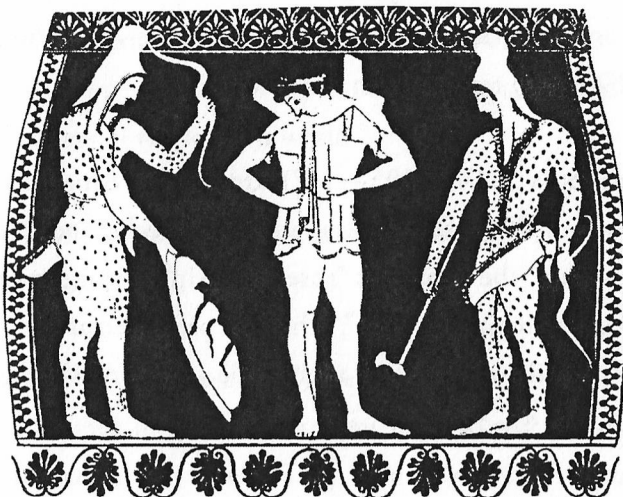
Rose in OCD (1949) “Amazons” states that “this or that place in Ionia was founded by Amazons”. In Homer’s Iliad the Amazons are associated with Lycia, Phrygia, Troy etc (von Geisau in DKP 1, p. 291 “Amazones”). These places we think once had African populations. The Caucasus,

Colchis, Scythia, and Themiscyra in northern Asia Minor were other places associated with the Amazons.

In other words such women were originally quite widespread in the eastern Aegean. I do not believe Rose’s (1964 : 214) assertion that the Amazons were the inhabitants of a “fairyland”. There are too many semi-historical stories attached to them. Wace & Stubbings (1962 : 306) regard them as real.

Herodotus (IV, 110 – 117) treats the Amazons as historical. When taken prisoner by the Greeks, and put on board ship, the Amazons “rose up against the crews, and massacred them to a man”. They are presented as savages. They mutilated or killed their male children (Diodorus Siculus 2, 45, 3).

Rawlinson (1910) in a footnote tells us that “Some Amazons were supposed to live in Asia, others in Africa”. Again the Niger-Congo prefix *a-*, and a probable Niger-Congo suffix *-n(V)*. The Sauromatae of Lake Maeotis (Herodotus IV, 117) were supposedly an offshoot of the Amazons. Of them Herodotus says : “no girl shall wed till she has killed a man in battle”. This inverts African practice. Men were expected to kill before they could marry.



“The warrior women known as Amazons have African prototypes : the royal bodyguards of Dahomey”.

This is no place to review the vast literature on this subject. We take the view that the references to Amazons in Greek mythology are based on early African matrilineal societies.

In Africa at Dahomey: “Le célèbre corps des amazones du Dahomey aurait été fort de 6.000 femmes” (Baumann & Westermann 1957 : 360). I regard these Amazons of Dahomey as the surviving vestige of an institution that must have been more widespread in primeval times, perhaps before the rise of patriarchy.

It is significant that Amazons have the task of protecting the king. One suspects that the king concerned was originally the African sacred child-king who was not permitted to grow up. PWS *má* means “mother”, and often has a prefix *a-*. The PWS word *muan* > *ma* means “bear” (a child). It is from *mba* to judge from Greenberg’s (1963 : 153) examples.

In the majority of tribes the power of women was eventually reduced by the practice of exogamy, which split them into two groups, ensuring male dominance.

Kirk (1974 : 245), referring to Dumézil (1924), however cites other cases of ritual sexual abstention, using artificial



odours (from onions), at Athenian festivals such as the Thesmophoria and Skira. Such abstention was intended to reinforce and renew the power of fertility.

Given the ancient practice of marriage by abduction, which was based on exogamy, a racial difference between the men and the women is not unlikely. Racial hatred is as old as mankind. It may involve sensitivity to differences of body odour due to different food preferences and the like. Sexual attraction and repulsion are bound up with body odours. Strangers and enemies could be detected by smell. This was one of the reasons for keeping dogs.

We suspect that the stories about Lemnos and Pelasgian expulsions contain echoes of ethnic cleansing. This is probably more fundamental than the sexual motive. Territorial considerations also came into play. The Pelasgians of Lemnos were foreigners, barbarians, strangers (to the Athenians) and therefore enemies to be expelled. They were demonised in order to justify this expulsion.

Mythology (Homer) makes the original occupants of Lemnos the Thracian Sintians, who were there before the Trojan War. These were the inhabitants when the Argonauts arrived. They were non-Greek. See Toynbee (1969 : 133).

Lemnos still has a fine harbour at Mudros, important for seafaring people such as the Pelasgians. The Italian School (1931-1936) found evidence for settlement at Poliochni on Lemnos going back to the Neolithic Period, and including the remains of two cities equipped with stone baths, representing the most advanced Neolithic civilisation yet found in the Aegean (NEB 1989, 7, 261). The women of Lemnos seem to have been meticulous about hygiene at a remarkably early date. Compare the bathing facilities at Knossos.

In the Bronze Age there was a port at Poliochni, where a Minoan type granulated gold charm (Matz 1962 : 61, plate 11) with pendent images of idols (stylised females) designed to protect the wearer, was found. Schliemann found similar images at Troy. A gold fibula shown in the same plate is decorated with wild goats and spirals. Spiral decoration is associated with women, as we have seen, and occurs both in the Cyclades and the Peloponnese.

The products of Lemnos still include grain, oil, wine and fruits, such crops as were grown on Minoan Crete. Today Lemnos is also a producer of cotton, used for sails and clothing in ancient Egypt for example. Lemnos was volcanic and sacred to Hephaistos. So the soil was

very fertile. The famous "Lemnian Earth", used to cure diseases, was of similar origin. It is possible that the bad smell of the Lemnian women came from the soil. Lemnian Earth was regarded as a cure for gangrene, which has a notorious odour.

The worship of Hephaistos (city Hephaistia) was important in ancient times. Compare the Minoan name Phaistos (Niger-Congo Bai, Pai, + prefix ). A cult of the Kabeiroi was also prominent on the island, non-Hellenic Aegean deities who promoted the fertility of cattle and protected sailors. At Samothrace and Thebes phallic rites and sacrificial pits are connected with the Kabeiroi.

The *anaktes paides* ("child kings") worshipped at Amphissa were thought to be the Kabeiroi (Pausanias 10, 38, 7 : *ANAKES*). We recognise here the Minoan word *WANA* "child king", which is ultimately African (and related to Swahili *bwana*). The Kaminia inscription begins with the expression *wana-lasial*. Early settlements have been described as Tyrrhenian (Mustilli 1942 ; della Seta 1927) however.

It is also worth remembering that Dionysus is thought to have come from neighbouring Thrace. He is a non-Greek god, and associated with the Kabeiroi. It is possible

that Kabeiroi is derived from PWS *bi* "child", Guang *ke-bi* "child", *ke-bià* "child", Tobote *ke-bi-ke* "child" etc. Dionysus is also connected with the Amazons.

Various historical versions have been given regarding the presence of Pelasgians on Lemnos. All agree in treating them as colonists.

Herodotus says Lemnos was occupied by Pelasgians who had in early times been driven out of Athens for abusing Athenian maidens and for plotting to take the city. Later Lemnos was conquered by Miltiades of Athens, who expelled the Pelasgians from the island. This happened at the time of the Ionic revolt.

Max Cary suggests however a settlement of Proto-Etruscans from Asia Minor occupied the island. An inscription found at Kaminia is in a language related to Etruscan. This argument makes the Pelasgians on Lemnos Etruscans. Did the Pelasgians of Lemnos come from Athens, or did they come from Asia Minor ? Can we decide ?

Thucydides (IV, 109) implies that the Pelasgians who once lived on Lemnos and at Athens were *Tyrsenoi*, that is Tyrrhenians. Various traditions connect the Tyrrhenians

with the Pelasgians, as we have seen in chapter I. The expression used by Thucydides is *to de pleiston Pelasgikon*, “mostly Pelasgian”. The Tyrrhenians are the Phoenicians, the great seafarers, traders and pirates of antiquity. They were known as “Red Men”, from the colour of their skin. Moscati (1968) has shown that they originated in Sinai. What is their relationship to the Pelasgians? And what is their relationship to the Etruscans?

It is best if we quote our main source, Herodotus (VI, 137 – 139) here in full in Rawlinson’s translation. In reading him one should bear in mind the saying “Cherchez la femme, et n’oubliez pas le dieu”. It is part of the Herodotean method of storytelling. His entire history is motivated, at least ostensibly, by a mythological wifestealing. The Delphic Oracle, as often in Herodotus, is integral to the story, always cryptic and always right. There is also a strong moral tone. And implied criticism of his predecessor Hecataeus.

“There were certain Pelasgians whom the Athenians once drove out of Attica; whether they did it justly or unjustly I cannot say, since I only know what is reported concerning it, which is the following: Hecataeus, the son of Hagesander, says in his History that it was unjustly (*adikōs*). “The Athenians”, according to him, “had given

to the Pelasgi a tract of land at the foot of Hymettus as payment for the wall with which the Pelasgians had surrounded their citadel. This land was barren, and little worth at the time; but the Pelasgians brought it into good condition; whereupon the Athenians begrudged them the tract, and desired to recover it. And so, without any better excuse, they took arms and drove out the Pelasgians.”

But the Athenians maintain that they were justified in what they did. “The Pelasgians”, they say, “while they lived at the foot of Hymettus, were wont to sally forth from that region and commit outrages on their children. For the Athenians used at that time to send their sons and daughters to draw water at the fountain called “the Nine Springs,” inasmuch as neither they nor the other Greeks had any household slaves in those days; and the maidens, whenever they came, were used rudely and insolently by the Pelasgians”.

[The maidens were celebrating the Brauronia, a four-yearly festival in which Attic girls between the ages of five and ten, “went in procession, dressed in crocus-coloured garments, to the sanctuary, and there performed a rite wherein they imitated bears. No Attic woman was allowed to marry till she had gone through this ceremony” (Rawlinson).

Similar rites were enacted at Halae (pretended human sacrifice) and Phocaea (alleged actual human sacrifice). Rose in the *OCD* (1949) sub "Artemis" gives references. The association of human sacrifice with marriage is authentic. Jane Harrison suggests they were originally impersonating cows, not bears. One thinks of the Minotaur.] Herodotus continues :

"Nor were they content thus ; but at the last they laid a plot, and were caught by the Athenians in the act of making an attempt upon their city. Then did the Athenians give proof how much better men they were than the Pelasgians ; for whereas they might have justly killed them all, having caught them in the very act of rebelling, they spared their lives, and only required that they should leave the country. Hereupon the Pelasgians quitted Attica, and settled in Lemnos and other places. Such are the accounts respectively of Hecataeus and the Athenians.

138. These same Pelasgians, after they were settled in Lemnos, conceived the wish to be revenged on the Athenians. So, as they were well acquainted with the Athenian festivals, they manned some penteconters, and having laid an ambush to catch the Athenian women as they kept the festival of Diana [Artemis] at Brauron, they

succeeded in carrying off a large number, whom they took to Lemnos and there kept as concubines".

[The festival of the Brauronia again enters the story, many years later. The sins of the fathers are visited on their children. Yet another abduction.]

"After a while the women bore children, whom they taught to speak the language of Attica and observe the manners of the Athenians. These boys refused to have any commerce with the sons of the Pelasgian women; and if a Pelasgian boy struck one of their number, they all made common cause, and joined in avenging their comrade; nay, the Greek boys even set up a claim to exercise lordship over the others, and succeeded in gaining the upper hand. When these things came to the ears of the Pelasgians, they took counsel together, and, on considering the matter, they grew frightened, and said one to another, "If these boys even now are resolved to make common cause against the sons of our lawful wives, and seek to exercise lordship over them, what may we expect when they grow up to be men?" Then it seemed good to the Pelasgians to kill all the sons of the Attic women; which they did accordingly, and at the same time slew likewise their mothers. From this deed, and that former crime of the Lemnian women, when they

slew their husbands in the days of Thoas, it has come to be usual throughout Greece to call wicked actions by the name of "Lemnian deeds".

139. When the Pelasgians had thus slain their children and their women, the earth refused to bring forth its fruits for them, and their wives bore fewer children, and their flocks and herds increased more slowly than before, till at last, sore pressed by famine and bereavement, they sent men to Delphi, and begged the god to tell them how they might obtain deliverance from their sufferings. The Pythoness answered, that "they must give the Athenians whatever satisfaction they might demand". Then the Pelasgians went to Athens and declared their wish to give the Athenians satisfaction for the wrong which they had done to them. So the Athenians had a couch prepared in their townhall, and adorned it with the fairest coverlets, and set by its side a table laden with all manner of good things, and then told the Pelasgians they must deliver up their country to them in a similar condition. The Pelasgians answered and said: "When a ship comes with a north wind from your country to ours in a single day, then will we give it up to you". This they said because they knew that what they required was impossible, for Attica lies a long way to the south of Lemnos.

140. No more passed at that time. But very many years afterwards, when the Hellespontian Chersonese had been brought under the power of Athens, Miltiades, the son of Cimon, sailed, during the prevalence of the Etesian winds, from Elaeus in Chersonese to Lemnos, and called on the Pelasgians to quit their island, reminding them of the prophecy which they had supposed it impossible to fulfil. The people of Hephaestia obeyed the call; but they of Myrina, not acknowledging the Chersonese to be any part of Attica, refused and were besieged and brought over by force. Thus was Lemnos gained by the Athenians and Miltiades".

Herodotus treats the history of Lemnos as controlled by fate. In remote times the Lemnian women killed their men. Centuries later, after the population of Lemnos had changed, the men of Lemnos (completely unrelated) killed their women and children. Behind these terrible events lies a pattern imposed by the gods. The idea of moral retribution, though vague, is also writ large. Order is imposed on the chaos of human affairs by the cryptic utterances of the Delphic Oracle. And the Athenians always have right on their side.

Herodotus maintains the involvement of his audience by introducing various psychological ploys: hostility



between the sexes, mothers turning their sons against their fathers, fathers killing their sons to take revenge against the mother. It all has a flavour that would be quite at home in a modern soap opera.

Can such an account be dignified by the name of history, as opposed to the Herodotean concept of *historiē* "enquiry", that is the storyteller travelling around garnering oral versions from all and sundry? The idea that history repeats itself is also prominent. In other words history is cyclic and is dominated by the mythical concept of the return. Herodotus is *homerikōtatos* in more ways than one.

A more modern explanation would invoke the concepts of territorial expansion, domination of trade, and emotional impulses towards racism and ethnic cleansing. But is there a sufficient core of "fact" in this story for a modern interpretation? If we are looking for accurate historical details, probably not. Viewed from a distance, however, there is a possible interpretation.

If we look at these traditions from a fifth century perspective, a fresh insight into the problem presents itself. By the fifth century Black Figure pottery had been replaced at Athens by Red Figure. A new ideal human profile, with an unnaturally enlarged Camper's angle,

gradually appears in the depiction of the face. I suspect, somewhat influenced no doubt by the views of Hugh Plommer, that this godlike concept (seen in the works of the Achilles Painter for example), is intended as a rejection of negroid features with their protruding nose, brow ridge and jutting jaw.

The idea of *kalokagathia*, "beauty and noble birth" is a factor. Good breeding, to the Greeks, was racially based. The ideal standard of beauty was an exaggerated Indo-Europeanism, embodied by speakers of Greek. Black was now bad. It was associated with slavery, and banausic occupations.

One recalls that Exekias, on a vase in London (Robertson 1939 : 64 plate, with page 67), had represented his rival Amasis as a black squire. "The Greeks did not admire negroid features", says Robertson. The inscription "may be a joke against his rival" he adds. Amasis was fond of depictions of snub-nosed satyrs and hairy silens. Was Amasis a negro?

By the fifth century BC the aboriginal populations, with their dusky complexions and supposedly bestial characteristics (as seen on ithyphallic satyrs and the like, who do not follow the classical ideal), had been expelled,

driven out into wild and remote areas, where they lived a rude and rustic existence, out of contact with the leisured nobility. They provided the negative standard against which the values of *kalokagathia* were defined.

NOTE: On Lemnos old tribal myths and customs persisted into historical times (Dumézil 1926: 8), to the horror of the Classical Greeks.

## XVI

### AFRICANS AT ROME

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“The image of the departed is placed in the most prominent position in his house, enclosed in a wooden shrine. This image is a wax mask, reproducing with remarkable fidelity both the features and complexion of the deceased.”

POLYBIUS

“Next to her stands Charun, the Etruscan messenger and herald of death ; he has an eagle’s beak of a nose and his flesh is grayish green, as though moldering in decay. A snake springs up beside him, and he grasps the shaft of a hammer, with which he gives the blow that ends life.” [Abridged].

KELLER

Whenever an illustrious Roman died, we are told by Polybius (*Histories* 6, 53), young men donned the wax death masks of their ancestors and impersonated their famous forebears at the funeral ceremony. When not in use these images were kept in the atrium. Where did this custom come from?

We know that it was not an Indo-European custom. For it exists nowhere else in the Indo-European world. Certainly it was not Greek. I

A possibility is that the practice originated among the Romans when they had already reached Italy. II

But this is unlikely. It is clearly based on ancestor worship. Each of the images "had its own little shuttered cupboard, which the head of the family could open only on certain prescribed occasions" (Pliny *NH*, 35, 2, 6). In Africa (Meyer 1992 : 73) masks were "imprisoned in a show case" or concealed from view (Cameroon).

Such religious customs tend to persevere, and are unlikely to be replaced. It is probable therefore that the predecessors of the Roman patricians had this custom before they came to Italy. But if so where did they come from?

The Egyptians made images of the dead in wax and clay. Like the Egyptian reserve heads the *imagines* existed in numerous copies, with an identifying name. A Roman bride would bring with her the images of her own ancestors, which were added to the series at her husband's house. III

In Africa it was common practice to make ancestral masks, and wear them in order to impersonate the dead ancestor (Meyer 1992 : 94). IV

Among the Yoruba of Nigeria the dead ancestors were believed to parade in the annual Egungun masquerade, wearing black masks just like the Roman death masks. In this way they exerted moral influence over the living. The Romans too looked to their ancestors for moral examples (Fyfe in Burenhult ed. 2003: 213). People recited the exploits of the famous dead forebears, and sought to emulate them in their own lives. There was also a belief that the grandchild was a reincarnation of the grandparent, which makes the whole procedure more intelligible.

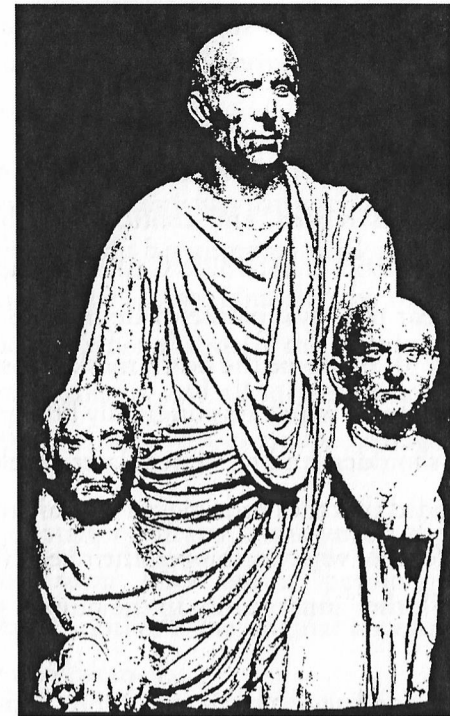
The Roman ancestral spirits were called the *Manes* (Ogilvie 1969 : 75-77), which reminds us of the African *mani*. The *lapis manalis*, the gate to the lower world, was lifted thrice

yearly (August 24<sup>th</sup>, October 5<sup>th</sup>, November 8<sup>th</sup>) so that these spirits could come up and receive offerings of food and drink : milk, honey, oil, blood, bread, beans, eggs, lentils. Compare the Greek Anthesteria (Rohde 1966 : 168), or “Feast of Souls”. The Roman *Lemures* were the evil household spirits who might harm the living.

In Africa likewise, at the twelve yearly Dogon Dama festival (also Nyama: Leuzinger 1960 : 28, 84), the ghosts of the dead were welcomed among the living, and food was put out for them (Griaule 1950). The Africans, too, recognised some ancestral spirits as harmful (Müller and Ritz-Müller 2000 : 188).

The original purpose of the death mask was to preserve (or conceal) the features of the dead during funeral ceremonies in the hot tropics. Decay sets in rapidly in such a climate. The sight of the swelling, deformed features is not welcome to the eyes of loving relatives. So the face must be covered up.

The original material used was probably clay, applied wet to the face of the dead. It took on an approximation of the features, hardened in the hot sun, and thus the death mask “portrait” originated, more or less by accident.



**“The practice of wearing the masks and insignia of eminent ancestors at funeral processions was intended to inspire young men to emulate the deeds of the deceased”.**

Later other materials were used, eg wax (the preferred material for Roman death masks ), which was applied to the features of the dead also in Egypt. Then the more valuable electrum, silver and, finally gold. Gold was the metal of immortality. It suggested reincarnation and rebirth.

The practice of preserving the skulls of the famous and infamous dead is related, and continues to this day in Africa (Meyer 1992 : 131-132). Cast brass heads were discovered near the royal palace of Ife in 1938 (Garlake 2002 : 19, pl. 5). At Rome the death mask was succeeded by the portrait bust, which was originally little more than a head. The shoulders and torso were later developments. One is reminded that the head enjoyed special prominence among the Yoruba, who worshipped their head (Oduyoye 1996 : 34-35), the "inner reality in the human person".

Recent work in archaeology (Moscati 1988 : 456-463) has established a link between the mask and painted ostrich eggs, which served a dual function : reincarnational and apotropaic. The eggs might be decorated with the eye of Horus, to ward off evil, or with a crude depiction of a face, representing the features of the dead. Such mask eggs are associated particularly with the Phoenicians, who had close contacts with Africa from a very early period.

They are the precursors of the Phoenician apotropaic masks, hung on walls of dwellings near the entrance to deter evil spirits. Typical features of the latter were the large, crescent-shaped eyes and wide grinning open mouth without teeth. We derive these features from the *rictus mortis*.

Roman patrician society was patriarchal. When a woman married she brought her ancestral masks to her husband's household. But the custom is much older than this. It goes back to the days when the role of the male in impregnation was as yet unknown, and all societies were matriarchal. Some of the African societies are matriarchal to this day.

This earlier state of affairs is shown by the etymology of the word *mani*. *Mani* means "person", then "man", but *ni* means "mother". The original ancestral spirits *par excellence* were women.

A gold head, two thirds life size, from the treasure of the Ashanti King Kofi Kakari, is the only gold object of its kind to have survived. (Leuzinger 1960 : 111, pl. 20). It is of unknown date, and is thought, due to the ring below the beard, to be the head of a conquered enemy. It does however provide evidence for the making of portraits of the dead.



Pendants in the form of the human face are made by the goldsmiths of the Ivory Coast (Meyer 1992 : 192, pl. 179). Some are quite realistic, while others are reduced to an oval perforated with triangles. The pendants with the largest perforated heads are considered to come from the Lagoons people. They are not strictly portraits, although they may on occasion represent an ancestor. Bouah sees the purpose of these heads as placing a man under the protection of his ancestors and warning off an aggressor.

Müller and Ritz-Müller (2000 : 412) in discussing the use of gold in the transition rites of sovereigns, tell us that gold dust was rubbed into the corpse and strewn over it. "Elsewhere, the mouth and ears of a dead sovereign would be filled with it, or a paste of gold dust and shea butter was applied to his eyes".

Gold was plentiful in this part of Africa. But it was not available to the Romans. Clay death masks, no doubt, preceded the making of gold death masks. One wonders whether the Romans came to Italy with a tradition of making death masks in both gold and clay, but reverted to clay alone, due to the local absence of the more precious material. The early Etruscans had an ample supply of gold, to judge from their burials.

Bloch : "The great wealth of Etruscan ivory, gold and silver remains thus betrays the tastes of a rather barbarous society". But gold was associated with death and royalty in Africa, as was ivory.

Certainly Egyptian practice, which surely reflects contemporary ancient African practice, suggests the making of masks in both clay and gold was known from very early times. Unfortunately the evidence, if it ever existed, has been stolen and melted down by tomb robbers.

In the Roman amphitheatre, which is known to be of Etruscan origin, the bodies of dead gladiators were dragged away with a meat hook through the Porta Nigra, or gate of death, by a masked figure called Charon.

In Etruscan art Kharun is depicted as a grotesque human monster (Pallottino 1952 : 117) with blue skin (François Tomb, Vulci) red eyes and snakes in his hair, often armed with a hammer or a torch, who comes to escort the dead to the next world (Wellard 1973 : 162, 169). Often a door of death is shown in the vicinity. The door of death can be seen also in Egyptian tombs. The hammer (or axe ?) was probably used to finish off mortally wounded gladiators. So Charon is evidently a death god.

These attributes should be related to the Egyptian god Anubis, the Jackal, whose tasks included embalming the dead. Egyptian master embalmers wore a mask in the shape of a jackal's head (Leca 1979: 183, Fig. 38; Spencer 1982: 129), impersonating Anubis who had mummified Osiris. The masks were equipped with eye holes under the chin to enable the wearer to see out.

Those who practised this craft were not welcome in society. Compare the mediaeval executioners who wore masks for similar reasons. These embalmers may once have also been executioners or butchers. The Roman *fascēs* (rods & axes) comes to mind here. The sacrificial double axe is a frequent symbol on Crete, but also occurs in Asia Minor (Schachermeyr 1929 : 283). Hood in Duhoux ed. (2003 : 51f) argues for a Near Eastern origin of this axe.

In Greek mythology the dead are conveyed across the river Styx by a dishevelled, elderly boatman called Charon. In Egyptian mythology likewise there is a boatman of the dead, "He Who Looks Backward". He was evidently poling his barque. Egyptian pyramids had boats buried nearby. In Africa canoe burial was practised.

African tribal names include Karungu, Karup. There is a Karon language (Atlantic) in West Africa. Niger-Congo has the root PWS *ka* "beast, flesh", Bamana *ka-ra* "flesh", Takponin *ka-ra* "flesh", Foro *ka-ri* "flesh". This suggests Charon was once a butcher. Flesh from the Roman gladiator games was destined for the butcher's shop. There is a Chari River near Lake Chad. The Etruscan city of Caere may be related. Both are from Niger-Congo *ka-ri* "flesh" (pl). Miniature boats of the dead have been found in Etruscan tombs.

The Etruscans were famous for their bells, eg on the tomb of Lars Porsenna at Chiusi (Wellard 1973 : 200). Wellard's drawing of this tomb is based on a description by Varro. It is noteworthy that the Minoans (now known to be African) had bells of clay, which preceded the making of bronze bells. Bells were associated with dead souls.

Other evidence for an early African presence at Rome can be found in the two-headed Janus figure, which again is not European. The Janus type however is widespread and common throughout Africa (Meyer 1992 : 108).

Significant too is the use of the *impluvium*, a feature of Roman domestic architecture which developed first we think in Africa (Willett 1993 : 128). The *impluvium* or

“rain-court” is used by the Yoruba, and is common in Senegal. It probably derives from the box-house of the African savanna (Glück). The Roman house was based on Etruscan models.

Etruscan plumbing and sewers such as the Cloaca Maxima formed the basis of the Roman system. It is tempting to speculate that the Roman baths may have remote connections with the Minoan lustral areas, and even with the baths of the Indus civilisation. Among the Nuba it was important to shave the body and keep it clean for the purpose of body-painting and tattooing identity marks (Riefenstahl 1997). No doubt the Greek custom of oiling the bodies of athletes had a similar origin. Great importance is attached to sports (wrestling, boxing etc) by the Nuba of the Sudan.

The ancient Roman punishment for parricide also warrants mention. The guilty person was sewn into a bag with a cock, a snake and a monkey, surely a punishment which could have been invented only in Africa. It combines magic with cruelty.

Latin, the language of the Romans, shows Niger-Congo influence eg in its verb forms. The future in *-bo* is from Niger-Congo root *bo* “be”, and the past in *-ba-m*, *-ba-s*, *-ba-t* etc is from Niger-Congo root *ba* “come”.

It has been said that Etruscan art defies interpretation because of the lack of an historical and cultural context (Spivey 1997 : 7). As we have now traced the Etruscans back to Africa, however, this objection no longer is valid. We can now make comparisons with relevant African artefacts, whose purpose and function is known.

Petrie found black *Bucchero* pottery with D XII & XIII potters' signs in Egypt. We take the Etruscan *cistae* or round bronze caskets as an example. Such objects have been found in Etruscan tombs. Is there anything analogous in Africa ?

In Burenholt ed. (2003 : 219) we find an illustration of an Asante *kuduo*. The picture shows a round brass container for valuables. These containers were “sometimes buried with their owner after death”, we are told. So no room is left for doubt that the Etruscan *cista* was identical to the *kuduo* made in Ghana. Both form and function, even the material of manufacture, are the same.

In ancient times the Etruscans are variously said to have come from Troy, Lydia, northern Italy, or to be autochthonous (sprung from the soil). The last opinion goes back to Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Strangely it has

many supporters today. Otto Brendel is more cautious (1978 : 15) : “we still know but little”. This thorny problem has now been solved. But did they go directly from Africa to Italy ? We cannot say. And we still do not really know their history in detail. For the Romans consigned them to oblivion, destroying their documents.

The Etruscans were originally matriarchal, were expert bronze-casters, and were known for their sadistic gladiator games featuring *inter alia* masked gladiators (Beckwith & Fisher 1999 : II, 114), bull-sports, and burning at the stake. The last of these was often mythologically motivated. Prostitutes serviced spectators aroused by the bloodshed.

Ivory arms (Cristofani 1998 : plate 14) suggest Africa, not only for the material (elephant tusks) but also for the cannibal associations of severed arms and hands carried around by the “natives”. These are commonly interpreted as backscratchers. They show elaborate ornamentation, possibly meant to depict tattoos.

Ivory also was the *sella curulis*, really a stool used as a symbol of authority by magistrates, and known to be Etruscan. In Africa the stool has powerful significance. Only kings were allowed to sit on “elephant stools” (Müller & Ritz-Müller (2000). Ivory reinforced the authoritarian

message. In Africa human stools squatted down to serve their masters.

To judge from the wall-paintings at Tarquinia the old Minoan tradition of colouring women white had continued in Etruria (Groenewegen-Frankfort & Ashmole : page 416, Colorplate 46). On the Tomb of the Lionesses a male and female dancer, painted red and white respectively, are depicted making hand gestures. A similar colour distinction is made on the Tomb of the Leopards, also at Tarquinia, which represents a blonde, white female dining with a red male (Pallottino 1952 : 67, plate). These female diners may be depicted as topless (Wellard). To the Romans, the Etruscans were immoral. Their women drank alcohol. Roman women were executed for this.

The double flutes, a musical instrument known also at Crete and in Egypt, appear on the Tomb of the Funeral Couch. The melodic line was played by the left hand, while the right played the base. This is in line with the African allocation of the left side to the female (higher pitch). These “flutes” were closer to the modern oboe. They were used not only for entertainment, but as an accompaniment to the whipping of slaves.

The Tomb of the Bulls (also Tarquinia) shows an erotic group charged by a bull. Fertility and death occur together.

African bullsports were associated with fertility.

The Tomb of the Hunter is illustrated with scenes of the chase. Hunting, likewise, was connected with war and mortality.

In Etruscan Rome was *Rumaχ*, the city's original name. One is tempted to speculate whether it derives from the Niger-Congo root *ru/lu* meaning "cow", with a suffix attached. Early Roman coins (*aes signatum*) show cattle (Kent 1978: pl. 3) and the Roman word for "money" was *pecunia*, which is from *pecus*, "cattle". Niger-Congo tribal names however include Rumaya (Benue-Congo) and Ruruma (Benue-Congo). *Ru, lu, du* also means "head".

The death spirits of the Etruscans were the *Lasas*, generally depicted as winged women. The Niger-Congo root *la* means "sleep", a euphemism for death, but also "old". Niger-Congo has kiLari, a tribal name and language. The Lemnos inscription begins with the words *wana lasial* (Niger Congo *wana* "child king", Cretan *wanax*; *lasi* (= *lari*) "ancestors", followed by a Niger-Congo postposed article *-al*). *Lasa* is from \*La-ri-sa.

With the *Lares* (originally *Lari*) were associated the *Penates*, the gods of the store cupboard. Their name is probably related to Niger-Congo root *pai* "to be full (cf PWS *ba* "barn")". Neither of these words has an Indo-European etymology. There is a Niger-Congo tribe called the Bena or Bene (Benue-Congo). Compare also Niger-Congo Bana (possibly Adamawa-Eastern). The Etruscans spoke an agglutinating language, like Niger-Congo. The emperor Claudius wrote a grammar of Etruscan but unfortunately it has not survived.

The Etruscans called themselves *Rasenna*, which may be from Niger-Congo *la/ra/da* "to buy or trade". Which reminds us of the *la-burinthos* at Knossos, the "the palace-market". However the root *Rase-* may be related to *Lases*, *Lasas*, *Lari*, African kiLari (dial. of kiKongo). In Niger-Congo languages *l* and *r* were interchangeable. The ending *-na* is a common Niger-Congo (and Etruscan) suffix. *Ras Shamra* (Ugarit) is similar. Could there be a connection?

The Egyptians called the Etruscans *Twrwš.w* (variants *Twrjš.w*, *Twjrš.w*), where *w* and *j* may be vowels. Georgiev (1966: 278-284) connects the Hittite *Truysa* (the Trojans) which is probably right in terms of our views about the



prehistory of Asia Minor, the evidence of the Lemnos inscription etc). Schliemann's "owl-headed vases" from Troy look strangely Etruscan – and African.

The Romans called the Etruscans *Tusci* or *Etrusci* (country Etruria), the Greeks *Tyrsenoi*. These words have been related to *tursis*, "tower" (compare Latin *turris* "tower"). I regard them as cognate with the Niger-Congo root *tu* "build", "heap up". Perhaps the *thyrsos* of the Bacchants is connected: in Cretan Linear A *TU* means "pestle", Niger-Congo *tu(nu)* "push, strike" as well as "build".

Comparable Niger-Congo names include Turuka, Turka (Gur), kinyaTuru (Benue-Congo) [also known as kiRimi, Limi, compare the Italian city Rimini], Tura (Mande), but from Africa we also have Tur (Chadic), Turkana (Chari-Nile). The Turumbu are Benue-Congo.

A vital piece of evidence in this puzzle is the prefix *E-* which identifies the name of the Etruscans as Niger-Congo. Vocalic prefixes are a diagnostic feature of Niger-Congo languages. But they are optional. Which explains why we have both Etrusci and Tusci. Vocalic prefixes also occur on Orvieto and Arezzo. The name Pisa is Niger-Congo Bisa (Mande), also ichiBisa (Benue-Congo). Fiesole matches the Afro-Asiatic Bienesho, Benesho however. In

the South, Bari recalls Nilo-Saharan Bari and Niger-Congo Bare. This suggests successive waves of African migration into Italy. The Etruscans may have been merely following in their African brothers' footsteps.

The strange Etruscan elongated bronze funerary statuettes (Pallottino 1955 : pl. 80 ; Moretti & Maetzke 1970 : 244-245), said by Bachofen to represent ghosts of the dead, are without parallel except in Africa, where we find the Giryama posts of Kenya (Kerchache, Paudrat & Stéphan 1993 : pl. 795-799). The latter however are of wood, which explains the elongated forms. Further examples in Schmalenbach (1988 : 285-6, Figs 88-90), of these "stake memorials" or Pfahlplastik monuments. These look very old.

Some of the Etruscan anthropoid cinerary urns are abstract (Pallottino 1955 : pl. 20) and not unlike eg the Akan funerary figure from Ghana (Kerchache, Paudrat & Stéphan 1993 : 896) or the jar from Angola illustrated by Baumann & Westermann (1957 : 82, pl. 23a). Others have a large figure of the deceased surrounded by smaller figures (Pallottino 1955 : pl. 22), ie his wives and vanquished enemies (Schmalenbach 1988 : 285) as in Africa, Nyika region.

The round Etruscan grave mounds at Cerveteri have African parallels in the Niger River area and elsewhere. "Tumuli occur right across the Sudan" (Garlake 2002 p. 98). But see also Schachermeyr's (1929) drawings (SKITZENBLATT III, IV, V) comparing tombs in Asia Minor. In Egypt, as in Etruria, stone was connected with death. Stone statues were always placed in tombs. The houses of the living were of less permanent materials.

The variety of Etruscan funerary practices, with both inhumation and cremation, is reflected by a similar variation in West Africa.

We know that the early people of Rome, prior to the time of the Twelve Tables, practised intramural burial, which is non-Indo-European. Compare Mycenae. We think these "early Romans" were Africans-cum-Etruscans, and that the Etruscans spoke Niger-Congo. It is now possible to present evidence that links Etruscan to Mande, a Niger-Congo language group. See Campbell-Dunn (2004) for linguistic comparisons (grammar, sound correspondences and basic vocabulary).

The original CVCVCV syllabic structure of Niger-Congo has been deformed by much vowel loss in Etruscan. A long sojourn overseas, in Asia Minor, is probable, before

the Etruscans reached Italy. Other Italic languages had a strong stress accent, which would induce vowel loss. In many words Etruscan vowels are reduced to *e* (shwa).

The Etruscans originally colonised the whole peninsula, from the Alps to the Straits of Messina. "In Tuscorum iure pene omnis Italia fuerat" says Cato. But in Classical times they were confined between the Tiber and the Arno. This region is still called Tuscany. It may still show some distinctive genetic material (Cavalli-Sforza 2000). But as a people the Etruscans are no more. Their art was absorbed into the Greek mainstream, and lost its individuality. Their books were lost or destroyed.

NOTE : For the origins of the Penates cult see Dubourdieu (1989). Cicero (*De Nat. Deor.* II, 68) connects the word with *penus* "nourishment" or *penitus* "in the interior". Compare Latin *pascō* "I feed". Alban, Trojan and indigenous legends were syncretised in this rite.

NOTE : In Africa today witches may be burned. Many Africans still believe in witchcraft and the divine power of fire. Compare the Indian Kali cult.

Various theories have been proposed to account for the bronze statuettes from ancient Sardinia and the stone structures known as *nuraghi*.

They are associated with Western megalithic culture. I This view has been largely discredited by excavation and earth-stratum surveys. But see the last chapter of this book.

They are a native Sardinian development, favoured by isolation and the Sardinian temperament. II This begs the question. And the question requires an answer.

They are the product of a belated encounter between Western, Near Eastern and barbarised Egyptian influences. III Pittau mentions Egyptian writing and art in Sardinia.

This theory could account for anything. Winkelmann, referring everything to his classical models, described the Nuragic sculptures as "ganz barbarisch".

We propose to argue for an African interpretation of the statuettes, and also of the associated stone fortifications known as *nuraghi*. We see them as the products of early African penetration of the Aegean and the Mediterranean. IV Sardinian placenames such as Uta, Abini (African Bini, that is the Edo) support this.

## XVII

### NURAGIC SARDINIA



"Figurines exuding motherliness, as well as carved bulls' heads are always found together in burial grounds. They reveal not only a mode of thought peculiar to a religion in which the mother-figure and matriarchy are predominant, but also the economic and agricultural stage of development".

LILLIU

"Ciò che soprattutto colpisce in queste statuette è il loro carattere al tempo stesso guerriero e sacrale, la semplicità dei mezzi impegnati e la grande efficacia espressiva di una austerità morale e di un impegno solenne parco di gesti, silenzioso."

BIANCHI BANDINELLI & GIULIANO

Pittau (1981 : 33 – 36) has argued for an Aegean (Compare Sardegna and Sardi with Sardis) and Cretan (Double axe, ox-hide ingots, tholoi, Minotaur) connection.

He lists the following placenames on Crete and Sardinia:

#### CRETE

Arbadēn, Gortyna, Itanós, Mátala, Tárriha.

#### SARDINIA

Aradēna or Aratēna, Gortoni, su Idánu, Matalè (*bis*), Tárribas or Tárribos.

We will not follow him into further linguistic detail. He makes much of Lydian, Lycian, and Mysian parallels.

As we have already seen, Bronze Age Crete was an African civilisation. Asia Minor, too, was once African. In any case Pittau does not regard the Nuragic people as autochthonous.

Lilliu (1956 : 15), who studied the Sardinian statuettes profoundly in his *Sculture della Sardegna Nuragica*, deduced from their disparate distribution, that they

had some protective or magical function. He detected elements of a Mediterranean formula that went back to “tempi minoico-micenei e geometrici paleoellenici”.

On page 17 of the same work he invokes mythical stories about early heroes such as Sardus and Norax who became gods, or others who found persons who had fallen into an endless sleep inside monumental tombs, not subject to mortal decay. When the hero awakes the sleeper in the tomb, he receives signs that reveal the future. Such beliefs, as he says, are not only Greco-Italic, but have a long history in Africa. African also is the multiplicity of limbs, double heads, twofold arms, on some figures, which represents superhuman or demonic strength.

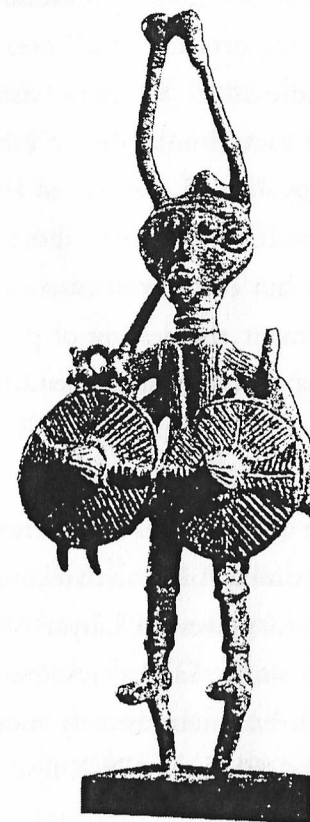
On the next page he indicates the importance of a bronze statuette from Nule (Sassari) which combines an animal body with a human head, wearing a horned helmet, with protruding crest and human arms (plates. 99 – 101).

This “dio-toro semiantropomorfo” is identical in type to the Cretan Minotaur, the progeny of intercourse between human and beast. The carnival processions of Mamutones and Boves described by Marchi (1951) are decadent survivals of the beliefs and practices connected with the prehistoric bull cult.

The Barbaricini, the descendants of the Proto-Sardinians, still worshipped trees and rocks in the Mediaeval period. Water also had magical powers in Sardinia. Near the megalithic Tombs of the Giants and sacred wells conical monuments with breasts, or less often abstract *phalli* attest the existence of ancient fertility rites.

Christian Zervos (1954) interprets the numerous effigies of animals from the Nuragic Period as divine incarnations of animals, and compares Egyptian practices of zoolatry, referring them to a tradition of matriarchy and Totemism. Egypt, after all, is part of Africa, and its religion must be seen in that context.

The juxtaposition of geometric or abstract elements with others that are naturalistic in the Nuragic bronzes is not adequately accounted for by calling them "folkloristic". The same juxtaposition is a feature of African sculpture. To some extent it is due to local variation. To some extent it is to be explained in terms of differing function.



**"These little figures have formal and iconographic affinities with the Bronzes of Benin and the Akan gold weights. This four-eyed figure is armed with double shields that indicate superhuman strength".**



A few "Cycladic idol"-like stone figures of abstract form also come from the same island. They are of early Bronze Age date and made of local stone. It follows that they are not "di diretta importazione dall' area egeo-cicladica" as Bianchi Bandinelli & Giuliano think. Found in association with carved bulls' heads (Carrà 1966 : 38, citing Lilliu) they "reveal a mode of thought peculiar to a religion in which the mother-figure and matriarchy are predominant but also the economic and agricultural stage of development..the destiny of plants and human beings pursues its course through the birth-death-rebirth cycle".

The same author (Carrà 1970 : 7) mentions an African component in Sardinia. And a myth recorded by Pausanias (X, 17, 2) and Isidore gives the Libyan Makeris as one of the leaders of colonists to Sardinia. A Phoenician presence in Sardinia has been established by modern excavators (Moscati 1972, I : 150 ff and 178-220).

Salient features of the Nuragic bronzes are the large heads, long necks and noses, and large hands. Like the "Cycladic" figures they are abstract or stylised, though in a different way, due to the different material and method of manufacture. Most appear to have been attached to altars, votive tables or the like. Many have a strangely flat

and attenuated appearance, and are sometimes decorated with prominent knobs. Like the Cycladic figurines, they are not fully three dimensional.

Comparisons with Geometric Pottery have been used to support a late date (S X BC, or even later), but I am not sure this is a valid conclusion. They have also been put as early as the sixteenth century BC. They show relatively little stylistic development through time.

The subjects include warriors (Bianchi Bandinelli & Giuliano 1976 : 66, pl 71), archers (Carrà 1966 : 33, pl 13), slingers (Carrà 1966 : 27, pl 11), wrestlers (Carrà 1966 : 29, 12), a mother with slain son (Carrà 1966 : 34, pl 14), chieftains (Carrà 1966 : 26, pl 10), heroes with two eyes and twin shields (Carrà 1966 : 41, pl 17) and miniature boats (Bianchi Bandinelli & Giuliano 1976 : 65, pl 70), all of which fit into the range of the African *bocio*. One of the figures (Carrà 1966 : 44, pl 19) has what appear to be Negroid facial features.

Again there is a connection with dangerous or critical activities. The chieftains, as our hypothesis predicts, have the right hand raised, with the open palm facing the viewer. The heroes with four eyes have parallels in the deformed *bocio* with two heads etc. "Two heads [or eyes]

are better than one". Many wear horns, or helmets with horns.

Of the warriors from Uta, in particular, Bianchi Bandinelli and Antonio Giuliano note that the type, "with small horned helmet and large sword of primitive type...does not belong to any typology of weapons of the Bronze or Iron Age known in the Mediterranean or Central European environment" (author's translation).

They regard the resemblance to the figures on the steatite Harvester Vase from Hagia Triada as "due to chance", but we think the similarity is highly significant. These people may have been an offshoot of the early Minoans. Hence the production of "Cycladic" stone statuettes.

In looking at the Nuragic statuettes one is reminded rather of the bronze and iron "Seated Male Figure" from Mali (Meyer 1992 : 151, pl 141) in New York Metropolitan, thought to be Dogon or Bozo. And at a greater remove, of the Benin bronzes, and Akan gold weights, which, cast by the lost wax technique, "display an unusual variety of motifs : living beings and material objects, rendered with verisimilitude, often with a humorous touch ; small animated human figures with slender curved forms, as well as popular scenes and customs" (Leuzinger 1960 : 112).

Compare Price (1976 : 95) : "Tiny brass figures are made today in Dahomey, though not as a royal art...local rulers sit enthroned, sceptre in hand, people drum and dance, farmers hoe the field, and craftsmen, like the blacksmith, make the things that people need".

The once numerous embossed bronze plaques affixed to the pillars and walls of the royal palace at Benin (Leuzinger 1960 : 131, pl. 29; Meyer 1992 : 44-47, pls. 29-32) are the modern descendants of this tradition however. Like the Nuragic figures, they are designed as attachments. They have been produced by the same method, but without the necessity to eliminate the background. They have the same severe, flat appearance, with an emphasis on the vertical, and the same predilection for knobs and grooves.

Like the Nuragic statuettes, they provide a pictorial catalogue of the human types known to the society of their origin. Clothes and weapons, the symbols of power are carefully detailed. The Oba stands a head taller than the others, to mark his importance (Meyer 1992 : 41). Likewise the Nuragic statuettes range from 10 to 19 centimetres, with the exception of the Chief, who stands an impressive 44 centimetres high.

Similar statuettes have been found in Spain (Vincent & Stradling 1994 : 27), holding small, round shields and short, broad daggers of Sardinian type. Pittau (1981 : 121 - 122) put Etruscans in Sardinia at an early date. But Sardinians and Etruscans alike were originally African.

As Pittau says, *defixiones* have been found in Sardinia. But the practice of impaling miniature images with spikes or nails is well established for *bocio* in Africa (Blier 1995). It was also used in Roman witchcraft. Witchcraft, we think, originated in Africa. A mediaeval resurgence of pagan practices such as bestiality (devil worship) in Spain lead to the terrible intervention of the Holy Inquisition.

The Sardinian stone towers, the *nuraghi*, over 7000 of them, have been dated by various methods to the second millennium BC and later. Bianchi Bandinelli & Giuliano (1973 : 68) : "Bronze loaves of Aegean type have been found in some *nuraghi*; in others beams of wood have been used that can be dated to between 1470 and 1070 BC by the method of radio-carbon analysis; in other cases the date indicated by the pottery is X-IX th century BC" (author's translation).

It is reasonable to put their beginning after 2000 BC, I think. But some favour a lower date. Moscati (1973 :

1650) gives "around 1100" as the starting point. Finzi (Zeppegno & Finzi 1977 : 28) dates the production of the bronzes between 1000 BC and 400 BC. Pittau (1981 : 27), referring to the authorities Lilliu and Guido, puts their appearance in the second half of the second millennium.

The towers seem to have ceased to be inhabited at the end of the sixth century BC, the time of the Carthaginian conquest. They were still however used for defensive purposes at the beginning of the third century, the date of the definitive subjugation by Rome.

The development of these complexes can perhaps best be seen at Barumini. The first stage is the construction of a conical stone tower about 10 metres in diameter, with very dense walls at the base. The method of building is a rather irregular type of corbelled vaulting. The upper part was probably finished with a pallisade or thatch. Inside were superposed beehive chambers, joined by narrow winding passageways. Small triangular windows were a feature, through which archers could operate. Four additional towers were subsequently built, joined by a wall, and incorporating a small hemispherical courtyard facing the entrance to the original tower. Other outlying stone cones followed, again with linking walls and, rooms inside. And

yet others. Analogous grouped stone towers are still built by the Kau, a Kordofanian (Niger-Congo) people of the African Sudan (Riefenstahl 1997).

The overall effect is mazelike, and bewildering to an intruder. The general impression is of organic growth, outward from a centre, in the manner of fairy rings. New structures were built to accommodate increasing numbers, and to provide them with a form of defence. Bianchi Bandinelli & Giuliano outline the type of society suggested by these structures as follows.

“Una società a livello pastorale divisa in gruppi tribali in convivenza e talora in lotta tra loro e che ogni villaggio aveva nelle nuraghe la sua torre di vendetta, il suo luogo di rifugio e di resistenza, posto nel punto più adatta, mentre intorno si addensavano le capanne circolari costruite in parte in pietrame e in parte di ramaglie” (Bianchi Bandinelli & Giuliano 1976 : 68).

“A society at pastoral level divided into tribal groups coexisting and sometimes fighting among themselves. Each village had in the *nuraghe* its tower of vendetta, its place of refuge and resistance, placed at the most suitable spot. While round about clustered the circular huts constructed partly of cut stone and partly of branches”. (Author’s translation).

The *nuraghi* cannot have held more than a relatively small number of warriors. Thus Finzi (Zeppegno & Finzi 1977 p. 30) thinks Barumini was occupied by 200 or 300 men at most.

Scholars agree that the *nuraghi* were tribal constructions, designed for tribal warfare. Compare Kerchache, Paudrat & Stéphan (1993 : pl. 1062) who reproduce a picture of a similar structure from Zimbabwe. The basic agglutinative system is the same as that used for the Minoan palaces. But there has been no progression from round to square structures. These people were too isolated, too provincial, to require a large square courtyard-market. Their vision was focussed inward. They had little contact with the outside world. They were on the fringes of civilisation and their neighbour was their enemy.

Similar circular, stone constructions to the *nuraghi* exist on the Balearic Islands, the *talayots*. An early people of Sardinia was named the Balari (Pausanias X, 17, 9), which cannot be an accident. Nor can the fact that the Island of Minorca was once called Nura (Itinerary of Antoninus 512, 1).

The choice of circular forms suggests Africa, the home of circular structures *par excellence*. Stone blocks are ill fitted to circular construction, which suggests the prototypes were made in a different material. The mud and plank buildings of Africa are the probable prototypes, and indeed there is general agreement that the stone vaulting was not carried all the way up. The upper parts of these buildings were of less permanent materials. One is reminded of the tholoi on the Messara Plain in Crete, which had courses of stone below, but thatch (presumably) above that. In Africa the lower parts of buildings were made of stone to keep out termites.

From North Africa Massimo Pittau (1981 : 88 – 89) mentions “torri megalitiche che assomigliano notevolmente ai nuraghi sardi, sia nella struttura architettonica sia nella funzionalità funerario-sacrale”. His sources are publications by E. Pais and G. Patroni, including Monumenti Antichi LIV, 1904.

At Zimbabwe there are stone circles and also partial stone tholoi type buildings like those of Sardinia (Garlake 2002 p. 151 f). The zimbabwes, or houses, built of mud brick, seem to have been modelled on stone prototypes, for zimbabwe means “a stone building”.

Political considerations have influenced the interpretation of these structures. Perhaps in time, the *nuraghi* will cast light on the zimbabwes, and the zimbabwes in turn will shed new light on the towers of Sardinia. In spite of the vast gulf in time and space which comes between them, I believe there is an essential connection.



Round buildings are found all over the Mediterranean. But their most developed form, the *tholos*, is more limited in its distribution, and occurs mainly in Greece. Two questions arise.

Do round buildings have an identifiable place of origin ?  
Is this place of origin Africa ? I

Are round buildings associated with the *Pelasgians*? II

In this chapter we will attempt to find an answer to these questions. The answer, we shall see, will prove strangely similar to the conclusions drawn in the first chapter of this book. We encounter similar problems, and offer a similar solution.

The earliest buildings were round wigwam like structures built of thatch and tree branches. The branches were fixed into the ground at the base and bent over to meet at the top to form a circular shelter. The shape of the structure was determined by the materials.

Cut stone however is quite different. It is generally laid in straight rows, and the buildings are rectangular.

## XVIII

### ROUND STONE BUILDINGS



“In its earlier phases, however, the the exotic elements of the Iberian megalithic culture stand out fairly clearly; for instance, the practice of placing with each corpse a small “idol” or amulet which may be anthropomorphic or entirely abstract and which appears to be intended to serve as a seat for the soul of the departed”.

“Despite their poverty in metal, the concentrations of these “tholoi” in close juxtaposition to the copper ore deposits, in southern Almonte and Almería can hardly be accidental”.

SAVORY

But what of round buildings built of stone? If the stones are uncut, it seems a natural progression from the wigwam to the round stone hut. In fact a few courses of stone at the base are useful to keep out termites. But continuing the stone structure further up becomes progressively more difficult. So thatch again is used. See Barker & Rasmussen's (1998) photograph of conical huts at Ardea (Page 35, Figure 18).

Such was probably the solution adopted for the tomb tholoi in the Messara plain at Crete (Pendlebury 1971 : 60, 63, 101), some of which reach forty feet in diameter. And for the early tholoi in the Peloponnese. Mud brick has also been regarded as a possibility for extending stone structures. In fact many early buildings are of mixed materials, combining stone, timber and mud brick. This is a very African approach to building.

It is worth mentioning here that inscribed diagrams of the "labyrinth" design often occur near early stone buildings. Such designs take the form of either a spiral, or boxed diminishing squares. It is just possible that these ubiquitous drawings were intended as plans for the construction of tholoi (round) or primitive pyramids (square) by corbelling. Some have a minotaur at the centre. Mythology imprisons the Minotaur in a labyrinth.

The large round buildings found at Athens and Tiryns (Lawrence 1962 : 17) under the Mycenaean remains are incomplete and open to conjecture. Round structures have also been found on the Greek islands (Vermeule 1972 : 56-58, with Fig. 11), sometimes with a barrow above.

Likewise at Termera on the Myndian promontary occupied by the Leleges, aboriginal inhabitants of the Aegean. The round building was retained in use for tombs. The neolithic inhabitants of Khirokitia in Cyprus buried their dead under the floors of the round huts in which they lived.

The pseudo-tholoi of Spain and Portugal (Savory 1968, chs. 4-6), some of which are corbelled, or thought to be corbelled, and some of which incorporate a passageway, have been compared with the round huts of Cyprus, but also with round buildings from the Halafian culture of North Syria. A dispersion from the Levant is one of several possibilities. Genetics favours this view (Arnaiz-Villena et Alii).

It is worth remembering in this connection that Minoan-type scripts have been found on Cyprus, and also at Philistine sites in the Levant.

But there are also parallels with round buildings in Crete and the Cyclades. Gordon Childe saw the tholoi of the Messara plain on Crete as possible prototypes for the round buildings of Spain (Childe 1973 : 59, 120f., 330). Some Iberian sites have fortifications similar to those of Chalandriani on Syros.

Associated pottery has been compared with that of Khirokitia in Cyprus in the sixth millennium BC, but also with the pottery of North Africa, eg that of Khartoum, in the fourth millennium BC.

Grave goods in Spain and Portugal include the axe and the hoe and "substitute" statuettes. Also "mother goddess" figurines and pottery connected with the mother goddess. Most of the sites have deposits of copper in the vicinity.

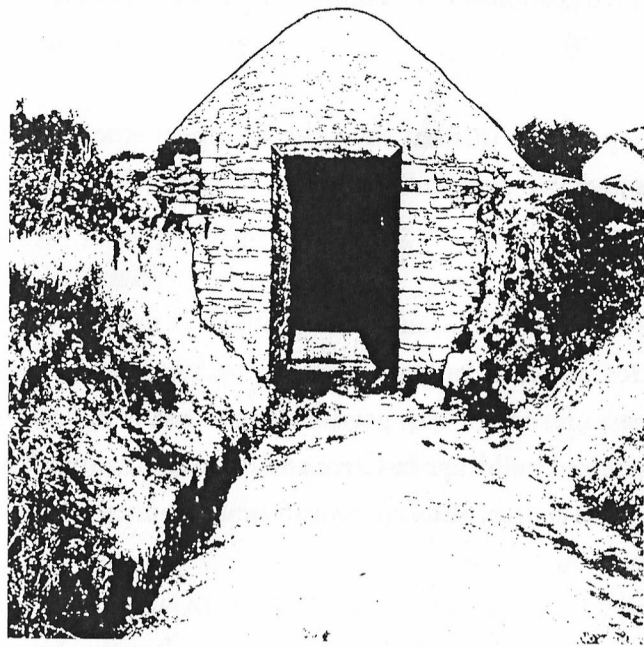
The tholoi at Los Millares (2750-2250 BC) typically have a lengthened passage, corbelled roofs, and in some cases a central pillar designed to support the apex of the vault. The covering mounds are invariably circular, up to 50 feet in diameter, sometimes built on platforms with a surface of beaten earth. One is reminded of Etruscan tombs at Cerveteri. The use of ivory, probably from the hippopotamus, and vases made of ostrich eggs, suggests a link with Africa.

It has been pointed out that "tholoi" in Brittany, which have been fixed c. 4000 BC by tree ring dating, are far too early to support a theory of Cretan influence coming from the round buildings of the Messara plain (c. 2500 BC). Aegean influence must be excluded (Renfrew 1968 ps. 11-19).

A response to this has been the argument that the type was invented in Brittany and was dispersed from west to east.

We think the solution to the problem is to be found in Africa. An early migration across the Strait of Gibraltar, going as far as Brittany, provides an alternative hypothesis. The round buildings in Crete and the Aegean come from the same source, but were transmitted by a later, sea-borne migration.

With the invention of bronze came the bronze saw and cut masonry. Round buildings should now have become obsolete. Cut masonry is better laid in straight rows. But old habits die hard, particularly where religion and burial practices are concerned. In Africa stone buildings were associated with metalworking, as Homburger points out.



**“The tholoi of Spain have been compared with those of the Mycenaean. But the Spanish tombs are thought to be much earlier. They are technically inferior to Mycenaean tombs”.**

The tholoi of the Greek mainland (Lawrence 1962 : 57-64) present a series beginning as early as the later sixteenth century. They occur at Mycenae, Pylos and as far North as Thessaly. Two in particular, the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae and the Treasury of Minyas at Orchomenos, are of the same size and date, early thirteenth century. There are also a few in the islands and along the Western coast of Asia Minor.

The type is derived from the Cretan tholos, and undergoes a long development, from the roughly built beginnings, with ill shaped stones and roofs that fell in (eg Epano Phournos at Mycenae, early 15<sup>th</sup> century), to the precision architecture, cut stone, and sophisticated corbelling of the advanced tholoi.

In one case, at least, horses were sacrificed in connection with the tholos burial (Taylour 1964 : 83), which brings to mind horse sacrifice at funerals in West Africa.

The great treasuries at Mycenae, of Atreus and Clytemnestra so called, employ conglomerate masonry and the corbelled vault with a capstone. The stones had to be specially cut, in diminishing courses, and laid to overlap inwards. The interstices are filled with pieces of stone packed with clay. A complete stone vault could now be achieved.

The Treasury of Atreus attains a remarkable size using this method, with an interior 47 ½ feet in diameter and 43 feet in height. It is built inside a dirt mound, which probably grew from the dirt ramps used to raise the stones. The approach (dromos) is 120 feet long and nearly 20 feet wide, leading to a doorway decorated with Minoan half columns almost 19 feet high. The small rock cut side chamber is an unusual feature.

The Treasury of Atreus is the largest unsupported chamber in antiquity prior to Hadrian's Pantheon. It is African building practice translated into stone. Building, which is practical in its aims, has become tomb architecture, which is not practical in the strict sense of the word, but is far more permanent and far more impressive. Death required a timeless memorial, the Minoan/Myceanaean equivalent of the pyramids.

As far as the true tholoi are concerned, those of the Minoan/Myceanaean tradition, their distribution, we must point out, is the same as the distribution of the historical Pelasgians : Thessaly, Central and Southern Greece, the Peloponnese, Crete and Western Asia Minor. This surely cannot be an accident. In its heel Italy has the curious *trulli* (\*turu-li) of Puglia, with associated primitive fertility rites. With Puglia compare the African (Gur) Puguli.

There arises the pertinent question of where the Minoans and Mycenaeans learned the art of cutting stone. The standard answer is that it came from the Hittites and Indo-Europeans, the Myceanaean Greeks. On the basis of the knowledge of the relieving triangle, seen on both the Lion Gate at Mycenae, and the entrance to the Treasury of Atreus and various other tholoi, one wonders if the stonemasons who made the later tholoi really came from Egypt. The Great Pyramid exhibits the use of the relieving triangle. It is not, I think, known to the Hittites.

Recently the German architect Friedrich Hinkel discovered in four pyramids at Meroe "the remains of a vertical post, made of cedar-wood, which he believes functioned as the shaft of a giant shaduf ... adapted for lifting stone blocks for the casing of the pyramid" (Davies & Freedman 1998 : 106).

The shaduf is thought to have been introduced to Egypt by the Hyksos, the Egyptian Shepherd Kings. The date of the later tholoi is consistent with use of the shaduf in building them. Some scholars have detected a Hyksos presence on Minoan Crete (Arnaiz-Villena et Alii eds. 2002). One wonders if such devices were employed for building the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae.



In Etruria and Spain the “tholoi” often have a central column beneath the “dome”. Does it represent the wooden shaft of a crane (shaduf) ? The balance employs the same principle in miniature. But the apparatus has its beginnings, no doubt, in the timeless figure of the coolie carrying a pole, with a bucket or weight balanced at both ends.

If one accepts that round stone buildings in general are African, and we think they are (Willcox 1984 : 81), then the whole Aegean and Mediterranean bears evidence of African builders and their influence.

Further, if we relate the building of developed tholoi to the use of the shaduf, we are faced with Hyksos at Mycenae. See Pittau (1981:110f) for evidence of Egyptians in both Etruria and Sardinia. Were these barbarised Egyptians descendants of the Hyksos ? Some scholars treat their artwork as “Syrian”.

Palestine has the placename Ituraea (I-tur- = E-tru-). The Ituraeans were from S. Arabia (DKP, 2, 1492, Schachermeyr). So we can set up a tentative equation : Etruscans = Ituraeans (nomads) = Philistines = Red Men = Africans (Ituri).

Both the Minoans and the Etruscans were Red Men therefore, Afro-Asiatics who came from Sinai, but were ultimately of African extraction. They were related to the Carthaginians, whose destruction Cato so earnestly desired. Carthage itself was utterly destroyed. And so, more insidiously, were their kindred, the Etruscans.

Etruria has a river called the Minio, whose name reminds us of Minos. Distant Arabia was home to the Minaei, traders in incense. Crete, Asia Minor, Greece, Etruria, were all colonised from the Levant. Which is also what the genetic evidence tells us. The Levantine populations have a prominent Afro-Asiatic genetic component, that appears throughout the Mediterranean.

Mining and a trade in metals was what motivated these wanderers. The English words “mine”, “minerals” are derived from French, and have cognates in Celtic languages ; but also in Spanish and Portuguese. Latin *mina* refers to a Greek coin (the *mnâ*, = 100 drachmas). Ernout & Meillet trace the word to Semitic : Akkadian *manû*, Ugaritic *mn*. We prefer to take it back to Niger-Congo *mi* “within”. Minona represented fertility, but also trade, increase. Hence the link with money. Latin *moneta*.

Meyer-Lübke (1935) documents a Romance root *mīn* meaning “maiden”, also “wild cat”, French *minon*, Walloon *minu*, Catalan *minyona* etc. But the Snake Goddess statuette has a cat on her headdress. So I think we have now found Minona in France and Spain. Further, *mi* is used in Niger-Congo for felines, “cat, lion etc”; Songhai *muši*, Gurma *mūti* “cat, lion”, Fula *musuru* “cat”, Kongo *misī* “cat”.

The Pelasgians colonised the ancient world, the world of Herodotus. Wherever they went in search of metals to trade their goddess Minona went with them. This is why the placename Minoa is so widespread.

NOTE : The dark Basques share a high Rh negative factor with the Bedouin and Berbers of Africa. They also have the world’s highest O blood group. S. W. Africans, Corsicans and Cretans show this same feature. Placenames and morphology connect Basque with Niger-Congo ex Nilo-Saharan. Berber is Afro-Asiatic, an offshoot of Niger-Congo.

## APPENDIX

### PLACENAMES AND PICTOGRAPHS



#### PLACENAMES

**Placenames are witnesses that continue to speak long after the people who made them have vanished from the earth.**

**They tell a tale of African migrations into the Mediterranean.**

We believe the Pelasgians were the original black African inhabitants of the Aegean and Mediterranean. Can we find supporting evidence for our claim in the surviving placenames? I think so.

To take Italy as a starting point, we can mention Bari and Como as African. But there is also a Komo on Crete and a Vari (< Bari) in Attica. Bologna (Italy) matches Boulogne (France), both from African Bolo (a common African tribal name) + *na*. Vulci, Volci is from the same source, with the addition of *ki* (African Boloki). Greek Volo (= Bolo) lacks a suffix. The Spanish Iberi (the same name is found in the Caucasus) comes from \*I-bari. Italian Rimini (with “people” suffix *-ni*) matches African Limi, Rimi, both Benue-Congo (= kinyaTuru = Egyptian *Turwš* = Turuša = Troy ?), but is also connected with Dimini in Thessaly [*l/r/d*]. The reduplicated Greek name Dodona is clearly African (Dodoma, *dodo* etc). But is it not from the same source as Dordogne? And the name Ida (Nigerian Idah) occurs not only on Crete, but in Asia Minor, near Troy, and in Idalium, a mountain city in Cyprus. Italia is also from \*Ida-ri [*d > t*]. Some typical examples, with African comparisons :

Konoso = Kono(h) (Mande), oluKonzo (Benue-Congo), Konso (Afro-Asiatic).

Candia = Kande (Benue-Congo), Kandi.

Khani = Kanioka etc (Benue-Congo).

Mallia = ishiMalilia (Benue-Congo), Mali (place); old Axos (= Axum ?)

Phaistos = Vai (Mande, related to Kono(h)), Pai (Benue-Congo), Bai.

Zakro = Dakoro (place in Niger), compare (#)Akro-tiri (Thera).

Komo = Komo (Benue-Congo), compare Komo-no, Komo-ro etc.

Gournia = Gurma (Gur), Gurmana (Benue-Congo) .

Phylakopi (on Melos) incorporates the word Pula (Fula or Peul, an Atlantic language).

Pelasgi itself is from \*Bara-si-gi (African Bara + ethnic *-si* + *-gi*, *-ki* seen on Mande names. Let us study some selected examples in more detail.

MINOS (MINΩΣ). This is traditionally thought of as the name of the king of Crete. It has even been translated “king”. But in the earliest Greek sources it is used without an article and does not have a word for “king” attached. So I consider the Indo-Europeans added a nominative *-s* to ‘Mino’, which was taken from the placename Minoa, and created a mythological personage. We now know the origin of “Minoa” (see below).

Toynbee (1969 : 196) mentions the “slave or semi-slave peasantry in Crete” who were called ‘Mnoïtai’ or ‘Mnoïa’, and still “lived under the laws of Minos” in historical times. The word ‘Mnoïtai’ is clearly from Mino, with loss of the *-i-*. These people were the original native population of Crete.

The placename Minoa occurs on Crete and in numerous places subject to Minoan influence. These include Crete, Siphnos, Amorgos, Sicily, Laconia and the Levant. Compare also Spanish/Portuguese Miño, and Minorca (Balearic Islands). Minoa however can be connected with the west African fertility goddess Minona, who was associated with snakes, and with the city of Minna in Nigeria. There is also a Mina in Mauretania (N. Africa). But the Minaeans are from Arabia, showing how far her influence extended.

The famous Cretan Snake Goddesses appear to represent the goddess Minona. On ancient Crete the importance of snakes is well known. They were even provided with “snake tubes” in which to live, and with bowls of food. A similar custom prevailed in neighbouring Cyprus and in Philistia. The association between bare-breasted women and snakes continues in the Greek maenad cult.

The relationship of Minos to Minyas, mythical king of Orchomemos, may be explained by a common Niger-Congo sound change of [*ua* > *o*]. We can then compare the name of a Mande (Mandekan) dialect Minua. Add Indo-European *-s* and we have Minyas. Toynbee (1976 p. 13) writes : “The Minyai were a people of the Pre-Hellenic Heroic Age who were located by Hellenic legend at three different points on the mainland of European Greece : ... at Pylos; ... at Orchomenos; ... at Iolkos. The heroes who sailed with Jason to find the golden fleece are collectively called Minyai..”. A placename Minya (near Hermopolis) however also occurs in Egypt. One thinks of the Egyptian fertility god Min in this connection. The African goddess Minona was likewise a fertility figure. (Linear A has *MINU-MI*, *MINU-TE*)

PHAISTOS (ΦΑΙΣΤΟΣ). Phaistos, Latin Phaestum (Crete), is related to Bai (Adamawa-Eastern) > Pai (Benue-Congo), Vai (Mande), as is Paestum in Italy. Basque has *bai*, *ibai*, *ibaiko* “bank of river” (Vidos 1959 p. 221). We may compare Phaeacia (Scheria = Corcyra), home of Homer’s Phaeacians, who have been identified as Minoans. Italy had a town called Baeae in Campania. The Spanish Baetica, Baecula also incorporate the same root. These names all probably derive from Bari “enclosure”

(E. Africa), also Bali (W. Africa), which goes back to Nilo-Saharan.

Bari is expanded to Barisi (-*si* makes ethnics), which gives rise to the far-flung Pharisees (Pari-si), on the one hand, and Paris (France) on the other. The Latin name of Paris was Lutetia Parisiorum. Toynbee (1969) has a chapter on the Paionians of Macedonia, in which he points out (page 97) the existence of related names such as Paionidai (mentioned by Beloch) in Athens and Argos. To these he adds Aetolian Paionion, Attic Paiania, Arcadian Paion, not to mention the Paioplai. Niger-Congo languages include Pai, Paiema, Pain, Pajade, also Bai, Baiduma, Bainuk, Bajama, Baju, Bajun. Cretan Linear A has this root in the words *PAI*, *PAIKI*, *PAITO* (Phaistos).

LARIS(S)A (ΛΑΡΙΣΣΑ). The name Larisa, known from Homer to have Pelasgian (*Iliad* II, 840-843) connections, is also widespread. Stephanus of Byzantium lists 12 cities of that name, Strabo 14, all of which except Larisa in Syria were in Greek speaking countries such as Thessaly and Argos. The name is found in Asia Minor (Phrikonis) and near the Cayster between Ephesus and Sardis. But as Toynbee states, the name cannot be Greek. He tentatively puts the Homeric Larisa in the Troad. Crete also has a Larisa. And there is a place of this name in Assyria. A

river in Achaea is called Larisus, as is a lake in Gaul. Italy has Larentia, associated with the myth of Romulus and Remus. Lake Como is also known as Larius Lacus. The Roman/Etruscan tutelary gods, protectors of the household, were called Lares. The Arval hymn however has the form Lases, compare the Etruscan Lasas, who were death goddesses, like the Roman Larvae. Larsa is a city in Babylonia. There is a city Lares in Numidia (Africa). Benue-Congo has a language name kiLari, and Nilo-Saharan (Chari-Nile) has Laramanik. Linear A words include *RARI*, *RARERA*, *RARIDE*.

These names demonstrate that African penetration of the Mediterranean was pervasive.

NOTE : Template theory, the hypothesis that Niger-Congo originally had a CVCVCV syllable structure, is valuable for the analysis of placenames. Often a redundant (repeated) vowel is deleted, giving CCV. Knossos < K(o)noso ; Lasas < \*La-ri-sa (Larsa) ; Etrusci < E-tu-ru-si-ki (Congolese Ituri, a tribe, kinyaTuru, a language, compare Ekuri & Kuri, Afro-Asiatic). Placenames also favour a limited (primary) phoneme set.



## PICTOGRAPHS

**Pictographs not only convey information about the world of the people who used them. They fingerprint the spread of early African civilisation.**

Pictographic scripts appear to have originated in Africa, in a ritual context (initiation). They evolved into catalogues recording things familiar to early man, the world and his environment. Eventually they came to be used as a form of writing. Ideographs gave way to syllabaries and alphabets. And the signs lost their meaningful, descriptive character.

In the Mediterranean pictographic scripts are associated with the presence of the Pelasgians. Crete has Cretan hieroglyphics, Egyptian hieroglyphics, Linear A, Linear B, and the glyphs of the Phaistos Disk. Elsewhere there are the semi-syllabaries of Spain, Etruscan script, which appears to derive from a syllabary, Linear B (and Linear A) in Greece, Miletos, S. Asia Minor. Cyprus too used syllabic and Linear scripts. Not to mention the signs on Trojan spindle whorls, which include the frequent swastika (picturing a fire-lighting device, according to Schliemann, hence the sun), and a loom.

## BALANCE

The Linear A and B scripts both include a sign for “scales” or “balance”, which does not occur in Cretan hieroglyphics. This, together with the more pictorial nature of Cretan hieroglyphics and their resistance to rotation, indicates that they are earlier. These “scales” provide valuable information about the technology available. The balance also had moral implications, as seen in the weighing of souls. Compare Egypt and the concept of *maat*. The balance is not depicted on the Phaistos Disk. So the disk was not concerned with trade (or else is “early”).

## WHEEL

The sign for “wheel” also occurs in the two Linear scripts, but not in Cretan hieroglyphics. Nor on the Phaistos Disk. The Linear A wheel sign has four spokes, as does the Linear B. Which may put this sign’s origin before 1400 BC, when the five-spoked wheel appeared in Egypt. The Philistines however seem to have persisted with four spokes. The sign for “chariot” is prominent in Linear B only. The Mycenaeans introduced the chariot (some time after 1600 BC, the date at which the horse appears in Crete).

## WOODEN TABLET

Duhoux (sign 5.29) reproduces a Cretan hieroglyphic sign for “wooden tablet” (Bourquin in Grumach ed.), evidence that tablets of wood were used on Crete alongside clay, but have not survived. Linear A 322 (Godart-Olivier) perhaps represents a wooden tablet also. But Linear B lacks a sign for this I think. The tablet has an African head.

## WINE &amp; WATER

The “wine” sign is confined to Linear A and B. It is based on the Egyptian hieroglyph of a trellis with vine. It is not found on the Phaistos Disk. Wine was a valuable luxury, produced by the Canaanites for Egyptian kings. It originated in Armenia and the Caucasus. The (water, and wine) jug turns up in Linear A, sign 412 (Godart-Olivier), Linear B, and on the Phaistos Disk (sign 20) where it has a later form with flatter foot. The amphora (wine jar) is seen in Linear B, possibly in Linear A, but not on the Phaistos Disk. The jug sign on the Disk is slim and elegant, with a high widest diameter and longish neck, but does not have a strongly upturned spout (impractical) as common in Kamare ware (1900 – 1700 BC). It is not stout, like early vases, or flat-topped, like Mycenaean ones. Objects should be dated by their latest feature. Compare the pot profiles in Tiré & Effenterre (1978 : plate X).

## AXE

The “double axe” appears in Cretan hieroglyphics, Linear A, Linear B, but not on the Phaistos Disk. Cretan hieroglyphics also has the single axe. The Phaistos Disk has a “hatchet”, sign 15, based on African hoe design. The double axe was a ritual object, a symbol of the Yoruba Storm God. Gold double axes were intended for dedications or ritual. Sacred axes are used to this day in the Congo (MacKenzie 1917/1996 : 312).

Evans found that the Lydian (or Carian) name for the double axe was *labrys*, from which he derived the word “labyrinth” (JHS XXI, 106f). Whether or not one agrees, it is worth noting that Niger-Congo for “bush knife” is *la, da* meaning “throw”. The word usually has an *a-* prefix : *a-da, a-da-re* etc. The Linear A sign for *DA* represents a “bush knife”. We regard the Lydians and Carians as African in origin. The Disk also has a carpenter’s angle (18), a knife in a scabbard (16), and a device for cutting leather (17). A bull’s head figurine was found with the Disk.

## SHIP

The sign for “ship”, pictorial, with oars, in Cretan hieroglyphics, stylised in Linear A and Linear B, problematic and rather late, with high bow and stern (for magic), on the Phaistos Disk, shows that our brief

survey of selected signs is merely an indication. The boat on the Hagia Triada Sarcophagus is a boat of the dead. It resembles Mesopotamian marsh boats (NEM 10 – 13).

A “sail” sign also occurs in Cretan hieroglyphics, Linear A and B. This, like the Egyptian hieroglyph, depicts a square sail. The Admiral’s Fresco from Thera shows ships with oars and square sails, steered with a large oar from the stern. Rowlocks were in use in Egypt from about the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The ships from Thera have numerous, parallel oars, functioning in unison. They are rowed, not paddled. Cycladic ships, too, were rowed.

Rotation of signs and loss of pictorial meaning may be better evidence for the date of the signs. This criterion puts the Phaistos Disk in a relatively early period, between Linear A and B. Yves Duhoux (1977) places the Disk between 1850 and 1600 BC. Godart in Renfrew ed. (1997) dates the Disk after 1450 BC citing signs 20 JUG and 25 SHIP as “second palace period”; but sign 2 CREST as perhaps later, near Medinet Habu.

#### HUMAN HEADS

The shaven heads of several human figures on the Disk are not Mycenaean. The Mycenaeans did not shave. The “Philistine”, with his crest (Mohican hairstyle), is a warrior. The bald “running figure” is probably a messenger. The

“shaven head with tattoo” is perhaps a slave. The tattoo may be an ownership mark. There is also a child, again without hair, and a bound bald captive. The woman (with hair, or a wig), is perhaps a mother. Egyptian male hieroglyphs often lack hair. But Egyptian females always wear hair or a wig. Number 7 is probably a breast, not a felt cap. Compare the Egyptian hieroglyph.

#### GLOVE

Number 8 on the Phaistos Disk is a glove, probably a boxing glove. Compare the fresco of boxing from Thera. The sport is African in origin. In Africa competitors wore a glove on one hand, as on Thera. This glove was a weapon. Sport was training for warfare.

#### PHAISTOS DISK

Many of the problems to do with the Minoans are encapsulated by the Phaistos Disk. It is possible that the “printed signs” pressed into the Disk were intended to receive small inlays, such as the ivory inlays reproduced by Stevenson Smith (1958/1965 : plates 82 (B), 83 (A), Dynasty XII-XIII). The date assigned to these is roughly the same as the date given to the Disk by Duhoux. One is also reminded of metal inlay, called *lamu* (the word means “good”), and practised in east Africa, but also used for the “Mycenaean” inlaid dagger blades (c 1550 BC on). Pernier

(1908) claimed that the signs on the Disk were not made with metal or stone tools. Perhaps they were produced by pressing inlays (possibly of bone) into the moist clay, which was then fired, like a tile. Such techniques were common also in Egypt and Cyprus. They would explain irregularities in the orientation of signs.

Sign 12 is probably a “sun” or “time” (related) sign. See the similar Egyptian hieroglyphics. It also resembles the *kernos*, which is regarded as typically Cretan, but unexplained, perhaps an offering table. Or the indentations may have held drinking cups.

### CRETAN NUMERALS

The Cretan signary has a system of numerals to base ten, derived from the HAND. Thus single digits are marked by vertical lines, grouped in four 1111 (four fingers). Tens are indicated by a longer horizontal lines drawn in pairs = (two arms). Hundreds are circles O (full moons, sign of completion). The TOTAL sign is a cross + or X (two hands, the V being one hand). The word for “big total” in Minoan is *KURO*, ie *ku* “big, increase” in Niger-Congo, followed by *ro* “one, total”, Niger-Congo *do, ro, lo* “one” (earlier *dua*). In Egyptian the cross is used as a numerical operator with various functions. Egyptian *ra* means “part”, all fractions being shown as denominators under

a numerator of “one”. Vertical strokes meant “one” in Egypt. “Ten” was an arch (conjoined arms). Metal rings were used as money on Crete. Also beads (Evans, Palace of Knossos).

Cretan hieroglyphics however uses crescent moons for units (indicating days). Tens are still long horizontal lines or dots. Hundreds consist of long near-vertical lines. Four lines joined to make a diamond (1000). See Evans (1921: I, 279).

The Roman numerals come from the Etruscan. Again vertical lines IIII (up to four) indicate units. But “five” is a V-sign (hand) and “ten” is an X (two arms or V-signs). The Romans used C for 100, ie a “big unit” (moon).

Neither pictographs nor numeral signs were standardised. The “bone fish” numerals given by Evans have a cross preceding each number. These were used for divination, like the Semitic Abjad.

NOTE : Signs with some numerals occur on wooden labels of the early Old Kingdom in Egypt (Emery 1961 : 52, 53, 59). See also the pot marks of D I & D II (Emery 1961 : 199 - 202) which match Cretan Linear Signs. Were Africans in Egypt at this time?



15. MACE BEARER'S TOMB  
KNOSSOS L.M.III.α  
C 1400 B.C.  
(VERY PALE BLUE GREEN)



16. PHAESTOS  
PALE BLUE  
C. 1400  
L.M. III. α

"Segmented Faience Beads used for commerce were found in Egypt, Cyprus, Crete, Mycenae, Spain and Britain." Evans (1921: I, 491).

## AFRICA

Various hand signs were used for numerals in Africa, in a trading context. See Stapleton (1903 : 108) and Homburger (1949 : 198). Metal rods (arms) and beads were in use as money. The metal cross was a prestige monetary symbol.

ETRUSCAN numerals are African. This can be seen from the fact that "four" is *śa*, but "ten" is *śar*. These numbers come from Niger-Congo *ta* "hand", also "four", and *tan* "ten" in Mande [*t > s*], with plural suffix *-n(i)*. Etruscan has an alternative plural suffix Niger-Congo *-r(i)*. Both these suffixes occur in Mande. Etruscan "one" is *thu*, from Niger-Congo *du(a)*. Etruscan changes *d* to *t*. Etruscan "two" is *esal*, from Niger-Congo ; Kukuruku *e-va* "two" (\**e-ba*), Nde *i-bal* "two". "Three" is *ci*, Niger-

Congo *ki-ti* "middle" (of hand). Etruscan "five" is *mach*, Niger-Congo *ma* "end" (of hand).

BASQUE numerals are also African. Thus *bat* "one", N-C *ba* "one person"; *bi*, *bida* "two", N-C *bidi* "two", "female breasts"; *hirur* (plural *-r*) "three", N-C *kiti* "middle" (of hand) [*k > h*]; *laur* "four" (\**la-ru-r(i)*), N-C *na* "four" (nasal grade), Ahlo *a-la* (prefixed), Nya *e-lē* (prefixed); *bast* "five", N-C *bua* "hand" (> *bo*, *ba*). The suffix *-t* on Basque "one" and "five" is a singular marker. Basque for "ten" is *hamar* from N-C *ka* "hand" (> *ha*) + *ma* "end" + *-r(i)* plural.

The numerals of both Etruscan and Basque are Niger-Congo not only lexically, but morphologically. So there is no doubt about the identification. On the other hand the two languages have selected quite differently from N-C language material. They have also chosen different forms of the pronoun "I". They are not closely related therefore, and must come from different subgroups. We think Mande (Etruscan), but Togo Remnant perhaps (Basque).

ACCENTS : African pitch marks appear on Cretan blockmarks, the Phaistos Disk and in Linear A. Conclusive evidence indeed. See Pernier (1935 : 411) for APICI.



The sun no longer rises on the black men of the Mediterranean. The masked hunters, the old fertility cults, have gone. War is no longer fought with spear and sword. And heroes no longer travel to the battlefield by chariot, reciting the genealogies of their ancestors before engagement.

All that remains today are masquerades such as the Procession of the Giants at Toledo, and the Running of the Bulls in northern Italian towns. But the meaning of such institutions is no longer understood. They are the last quaint survivals of a ghostly past, a side show in a circus where the main players now have different mores and different values.

AVE, VIATOR, ET VALE. That is "Hail, Traveller, and goodbye". Thus speaks the voice from the tomb.

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## POSTSCRIPT

This book has not taken account of Sumerian, which is regarded as a language isolate, and is not normally included within the Classics. Evidence is however beginning to emerge that Sumerian, like Etruscan and Basque, is related to Niger-Congo. Thus the Sumerian word for “tongue” is *eme* (= PWS *lima*, > (d)*eme* “tongue”). The dialect called *eme-sal* probably is *eme* + *ka/kha* “small, woman” + *-l* (Niger-Congo article *-la*, *-a*, *-al* etc). Sumerian *lugal* “king, chief” is from PWS *lu* “head” + *ka* “king” or *gá(n)* “chief” + *-l* article. The same old Niger-Congo postposed article is used to form adjectives with an *-a* suffix, (Kecher’s “definite”), and also relative clauses (“big adjectives”). Postposed ergative *-e* is from Niger-Congo *-ke* “make”. Sumerian conjugation prefix *i-* matches the *i-* prefix of Togo Remnant infinitives. Modal prefixes can be matched: S. *na-* “prohibitive”, PWS *na* “not”. The verb-final patterns of Sumerian agree with Mande. And the Sumerian syllabic pictographs have affinities with those of African Vai etc, also with the Cretan Linear Scripts, even in their use of amissable Auslaut consonants. Westermann’s PWS (approximating Niger-Congo-Nilo-Saharan) is remarkable for reconstructing alternative word stems with and without a final consonant (*ka*, *kan* etc). Other Sumerian comparable words are : S. *nin* “lady” = PWS *ni*, (*nina*) “mother”, S. *nitah* “man”, PWS *ni* “man”, Wolof *nit* “man”, S. *ani*, *ni* “him, her, thing”, PWS *ni*, (*ani*) “this” (the *a-* is a Niger-Congo prefix), S. *gin* “to go”, PWS *gi* “to go”, S. *a* “water”, PWS (*m*)*a* “liquid”, S. *ba* “to give”, PWS *búá*, (*ba*) “arm, hand”, S. *i* “oil, fat”, PWS (*m*)*i* “oil, fat”, S. *ki* “earth”, PWS *gi* “black”, S. *sar* “to write”, PWS *ta-*(*re*) “to speak”, S. *še* “barley”, N-C (Nigeria) *te* “head of corn”, S. *aba* “who?”, PWS (*a*)-*ba* “someone”, S. *ana* “what?”, PWS (*a*)-*na* “this, that”. The determinatives are N-C.

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<i>Callisthenes</i>	<i>Philippus of Theangela</i>
<i>Cato</i>	<i>Philostratus</i>
<i>Dionysius Halicarnassensis</i>	<i>Plato</i>
<i>Euripides</i>	<i>Pliny The Elder</i>
<i>Hecataeus</i>	<i>Plutarch</i>
<i>Hellanicus</i>	<i>Pollux</i>
<i>Herodotus</i>	<i>Polybius</i>
<i>Hesiod</i>	<i>Sophocles</i>
<i>Hesychius</i>	<i>Thucydides</i>
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BSA Annual of the British School of Archaeology at Athens

DKP Der Kleine Pauly 1979

(N)EB (New) Encyclopedia Britannica 1989

OCD Oxford Classical Dictionary 1949

AJA American Journal of Archaeology

JHS Journal of Hellenic Studies

FGH & FGrH Fragment. Gr. Hist. (Ed. Var.)

Articles by Flinders Petrie in JHS (1890) and C. Gordon in AJA (1952). Sakellerakis, Archanes, Athens, 1991. NEM indicates J. Gray, (1969), Near Eastern Mythology, Hamlyn, London. A. Werner's (1933/1995) Africa: Myths and Legends, London, refers to ghosts, the external soul, bird-souls, snakes, ox-hunger etc.

CV	Consonant Vowel
D	Dynasty
EC	Early Cycladic
EH	Early Helladic
M	Millennium
N-C	Niger-Congo
PWS	Proto-Western Sudanic
S	Saeculum

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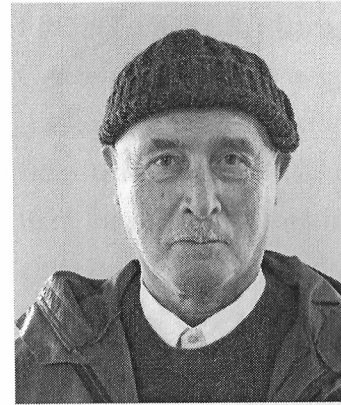
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Graham Campbell-Dunn was awarded his MA in Classics with First Class Honours by the University of New Zealand and went to Cambridge on a Postgraduate Scholarship. There he studied under the comparativists WS Allen and RG Coleman, and was privileged to be taught by John Chadwick, who worked on Mycenaean Greek. His teachers also included John Lyons (Linguistics), Frank Stubbings, RM Cook and Hugh Plommer (Archaeology).

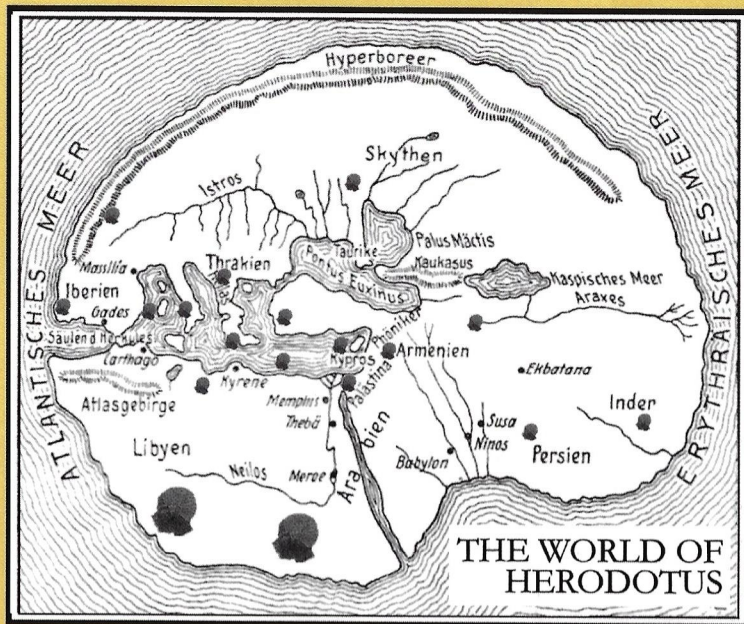
Returning to New Zealand he taught Classics at University and researched a PhD on Herodotus, the Greek historian and anthropologist. He has a special interest in Italian substrate theory, and has spent his retirement investigating links between Africa and the early Mediterranean. Graham is a follower of the German Africanist D. Westermann.

**FRONT COVER :** Laconian Cup. King Arcesilas II of Cyrene supervises the weighing and loading of cotton into the hold of a ship. Cotton has been a product of Africa from time immemorial. Bales of similar shape are still used for packing cotton in the Sudan. African birds and animals watch the proceedings with interest. The talking inscriptions add an unusual comic strip flavour to the painting. Diameter 15 inches. Paris.

**BACK COVER :** Map of World of Herodotus from Das grosse Wagnis, Berlin, 1936. The map has been drawn from geographical indications in the works of Herodotus. The world is thought of as a roughly circular land mass surrounded by water, a notion that goes back to the poet Homer. The Niger and the Nile rivers are not distinguished. The extremities of the earth are Spain in the West and India in the East. Britain, the Americas, the Far East are not shown. A schematic world is bisected into North and South by the Mediterranean, Euxine and Caspian seas. A more recent Herodotean map in Everyman's Classical Atlas (1961) shows Ethiopians in Africa and India.








According to the Greek historian Herodotus the Pelasgians of his day spoke a foreign tongue, and lived in remote villages, observing primitive religious practices.

But was it always so? And who were these elusive Pelasgians? They were the dark, dolichocephalic race, who formed the primitive population of the Mediterranean basin and spoke African languages. Driven out of their lands, exterminated or enslaved, they lost their name and identity as a people.

Red Afro-Asiatic traders displaced them. Then came the warlike Indo-Europeans. Now only the Basques survive.

  
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